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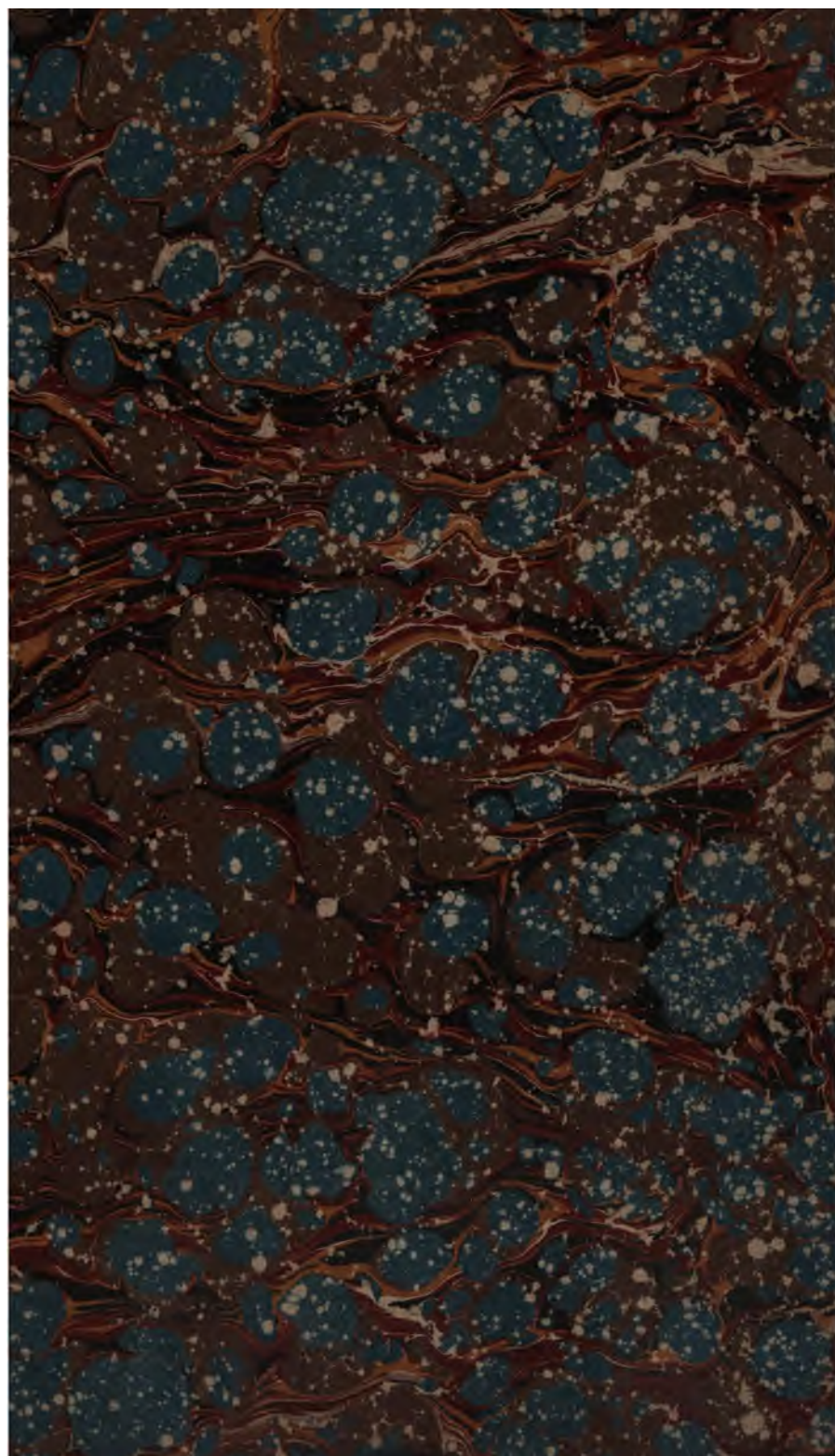
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JUNE 11, 1932



MEMOIRS
OF
MIRABEAU:

BIOGRAPHICAL, LITERARY, AND POLITICAL.

BY HIMSELF,
HIS FATHER, HIS UNCLE, AND HIS ADOPTED CHILD.

VOL. II.

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MEMOIRS OF MIRABEAU.

BOOK IV.

IT would be easy for us, without much labour or research, to give a very complete account of Mirabeau's marriage. We should only have to copy a part of the justification concluding the first volume of the correspondence from Vincennes *, a production as remarkable for strength of logic, address, and temperance of language, as the interest it excites. This narrative is lucidly and elegantly written. The fear, however, of rendering this episode too long, prevents us from transcribing it. We therefore limit our account of the marriage to a few pages, in which, according to the plan we have hitherto adopted, we give extracts from the unpublished correspondence in our possession, preferring it, as we do, to printed documents.

Mirabeau was at that time the only member of his

* Dated March 1st 1778. See vol. iv. of the original edition, pp. 287—436.

family residing in Provence ; for, “ neither the Marquis, nor his brother, nor any of the elder members of the family, gave themselves the trouble to be present at the marriage of the heir of their house to one of the richest heiresses in the kingdom *.” The Marquis did not appear to attach much importance to it, as is proved by the continuation of a letter, the beginning of which we have already given. In it the habitual and rapid change in the writer’s opinions are very evident.

“ It is well to inform you that I have an *impegnò* more than many others : I have adopted the mania and pretension of managing my own business, and remaining an honest man notwithstanding. It was thus necessary that I should free my conscience from the future remorse of having presented a man of such temper to become the father of a family. I therefore protested, strongly, and at great length, that we neither knew nor presented him ; that I left him at Aix, a town as large as

* Unpublished notes by Mirabeau, upon the minutes of the above-mentioned justification of the 1st of March 1778. The unfortunate result of this union were partly to be attributed to these circumstances. The Bailli gives evidence of this :—“ I shall lament during the remainder of my life not having gone to Provence when he married.”—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 26th 1781.*

These details show the error which Peuchet committed, in supposing that Mirabeau’s uncle was with him at that period, an error which afterwards proved highly prejudicial to the nephew. Vol. i. p. 87.

a snuff-box, in order that he might be known, judged, &c.; but they take him, they will have him, and I give him to them with all my heart. I make over to him nothing but some entailed property, and I have inserted in the marriage settlement, the same condition respecting what his wife is to have. This settlement is to be as free as possible from all legal jargon. After that, I give them my paternal blessing, and many other things, (except lace, which I do not like because it yields no manure,) for women love a good appearance. Thus, in all probability, he will soon marry the heiress of Marignane, who has great expectations and more than six hundred thousand francs certain at present. I have lately written about this less than trifling affair, more than St. Jerome ever did, and indeed I do not digest better than he would have done, if, when he left off his grass, he had been invited to a wedding feast. But we can make tools only from the materials we possess. What I here mention is not to play the coxcomb, and insinuate that under any circumstances I should not have looked upon the marriage as a very advantageous one. But if my son had been more like myself, as I am not very covetous, I should have kept him to myself, in spite of his ardour, which being of the same kind as my own, is not fit to serve as a lining. But the young lady has a tolerable person, a good reputation, and considerable energy of

character. She was brought up under the care of an avaricious grandmother *, who did not treat her as a rich heiress, although she is one †."

This latter qualification which is always appreciated, had, more than the young lady's personal attractions, rendered her an object of universal admiration and homage. Mary Emily de Covet, only daughter of the Marquis of Marignane, was then eighteen years of age. Her features were plain, and even appeared vulgar at first sight; her complexion was very dark, almost Moorish; she had fine eyes and beautiful hair; but her teeth were not very good. A sweet smile continually played upon her lips. Her figure was small, but well formed although she leant a little on one side. She was gay, lively, sensible, and mild; and her disposition was very amiable ‡. The Marquis of Marignane, being separated from the Marchioness, Emily led rather a dull life. She was scolded from morning to night by her grandmother, with whom she lived, and who was nicknamed La Renarelle. Being neglected by her father and ill-treated by her mother, any circumstance which relieved

* Her maternal grandmother, the Marchioness of Maliverni.

† Unpublished letter, already quoted, from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Countess of Rochefort, dated May 1st 1742.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated September 1st 1772. At this period, which was four months after the marriage, the Bailli was at Mirabeau, where he remained a few days prior to his departure for Malta.

her from this situation appeared to her very desirable *. She therefore showed no disinclination to marriage, and readily accepted the proposals made to her.

The first offer made, was by a person who did not seem likely to have any rivals :—the Count of Valbelle, one of the most opulent and magnificent nobles of the province, and at the same time the most intimate friend of the lady's father †. But this offer failed from the following circumstance.

“Madame des Rolands, queen of the Court of Love, that is to say of the society at Tourves (the Count of Valbelle's residence), became exceedingly alarmed, as you may easily imagine ; for she every day expected the death of her husband, who was eighty years of age. This marriage would have destroyed all her plans, and made her lose the benefit of the earnest she had given him of their future union, and which was pretty generally known. Tears, threats, supplications, all means were employed to dissuade the Count from the marriage. She at length introduced and praised

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated February 22nd 1783.

† We find, in a letter from the Bailli of Mirabeau, the following passage concerning the Count of Valbelle.

“There never was a man of more dignified manners; his character was ostentatious, his imagination still more so. He displayed his character in his will, dated 1778. His legacy to the Academy did not proceed from any taste for literature, which he liked neither more nor less than china-ware: it was an act of mere ostentation.”—*Unpublished letter, dated May 15th 1779.*

little Lavallette, and the marriage with the latter was almost settled, although the Marquis of Grammont, the Marquis of Caumont, the Viscount Chabillant, D'Albertat and others, presented themselves and made the most advantageous proposals. Limaye * urged me on. I got warm upon the subject, and set to work, the more so, because I felt myself suddenly roused by an expression of my father's †. They were astonished to see Madlle. de Marignane undecided, although the articles with Lavallette were signed. The Court of Love raised a furious cabal against me, to which I paid no attention. They told me the place was impregnable, and not to be attacked. I admitted it, with the understanding, however, that I knew of few things not to be overcome, and none that could not be attacked. Lavallette, I was told, made many remarks upon my birth, my personal qualities, and my fortune; I proved that Lavallette had not even the honour of being *yellow*, as it is termed, for he was not of noble birth; that he possessed not, and would never possess, even twelve thousand francs a year. Mademoiselle de Marignane said to him—

“ ‘ I promised, sir, but the promise was made upon false representations.’ ”

* The Countess of Limaye, a relation of the Mirabeau family. The biographer Peuchet, accustomed to disfigure names, calls her Madame de Limay, lib. i. p. 90.

† See the Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. i. p. 302.

“ ‘ Who dares to say so ? ’

“ The grandmother replied in her falsetto voice, ‘ The count of Mirabeau, who begged I would name him.’

Lavallette set off next day. But you may well conceive that the Court of Love was almost mad on the occasion*.

This account, written eight years after the event, to a person who took no share in the transaction, is in part correct.

Until the year 1772, Mirabeau, confined in the paternal mansion, and wholly occupied in farming and agricultural experiments, had frequently refused proposals of marriage which his family had renewed, being extremely desirous of perpetuating the name, and far gone with the mania of having posterity. These were the very expressions used by the Bailli, who then resided at Versailles.

In the advantages of birth and intellect, Mirabeau had no rival to fear; but he was not, like his competitors, endowed with personal advantages, and he possessed no actual income of his own. He thus unhesitatingly retreated before the first refusal; but the harsh and unjust reproaches of the Marquis stimulated his pride, and he presented himself a second time. He

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated October 15th 1780.

exerted the powers of pleasing which he possessed to a great degree, and he soon had every chance of success. But his father now refused to fulfil the stipulations he had already agreed to, relative to the marriage settlements. Mirabeau therefore again hesitated to push his suit. Already much involved, from the penury to which the avarice of his father had reduced him, joined to his taste for show, and his excessive negligence in money matters, which was his failing through life, he apprehended that his difficulties would still increase, from the wish he very naturally entertained, not to expose a young female, hitherto in the enjoyment of all the luxuries of opulence, to the inconveniences arising from a straitened income. Emily's love dissipated his fears; it was further "assisted by all the women whose heads he had turned*." She put aside every obstacle, and on the 22nd of June 1772, Mirabeau obtained her hand, for which he was indebted in part to interested motives†,

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau. "Marignane is himself a madman in giving his daughter to a madman; but the youth had gained over all the female relations, both old and young."

† This man, who was much esteemed (for esteem is easily acquired in our country), thus gave his daughter in marriage because it cost him only three thousand francs a year, instead of four thousand, which he was to have given to Lavallette."— *Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 31st 1777.* It is but fair to mention this fact, in opposition to the reproach of

but mostly to an affection at that time lively and devoted, and not to base seduction, as some persons shamefully asserted*, and published.

cupidity addressed to Mirabeau and his family at the time of the law proceedings for a separation, which caused so much scandal at Aix in 1783.

* Mirabeau several times contradicted these rumours or reproaches in the most vehement manner, and that too in the very places where the truth was most likely to be known—for what can remain unknown in a small town? He particularly refuted this calumny in the paper which he published in 1783 and 1784, during the proceedings for a separation. See, 1st p. 31. of “Observations on a slanderous libel, called Brief and Counsel’s opinion in the case of the Countess of Mirabeau,” Aix, Joseph David, 1783, 302 pages; 2ndly, p. 5 in the note of “Justification of the Count of Mirabeau, suppressed at the moment of its publication by the especial command of the Keeper of the Seals, and republished from respect for the king and justice, with a conversation on the subject between the Keeper of the Seals and the Count of Mirabeau,” 1784, 8vo. In a publication prior to this (Observations for the Count of Mirabeau. &c., Aix, Joseph David, 1783, 73 pp. 8vo.) he states “Madlle. de Marignane married, on the 22nd of June 1772, the Count of Mirabeau, and every one in the province knows that he was the husband of her choice.” (p. 1). His adversaries, eager to slander him, thus spoke of this sentence, the meaning of which is so clear.

“The Count of Mirabeau has not feared to endeavour to calumniate the very principle of a union, the privileges of which he now dares to claim.”

Nothing can be more energetic and peremptory than the refutation which Mirabeau gave to this dastardly insinuation, attributing to him a design so contrary to the object he had in view. Nevertheless his principal biographer, Peuchet, ever eager for scandal, in vol. i. p. 97, earnestly insists upon the probability of seduction; but, according to his constant habit, does not adduce the slightest proof. In this instance, at least, he had none.

However splendid this union in a pecuniary sense, its advantages could be realised only at some future and indefinite period. Mirabeau never enjoyed these advantages. He did not squander his wife's property, as has been published*, for he received no property with her, except a pension of three thousand francs a year†, and a promise of three hundred thousand francs at the death of the Marquis of Marignane, who survived his son-in-law twelve years. He obtained nothing from the Marchioness of Mirabeau, although she entertained a marked preference for her eldest son, a partiality which, as will presently be shown, was often the subject of disgraceful attacks. She was perhaps vexed at not having *been consulted* on the marriage, of which she was merely informed by the following sentence, bearing the full imprint of conjugal despotism :—

* Chaudon's Dictionary, vol. viii. p. 309 ; small Universal Biography, termed Classic, Paris, Gosselin, 1829, second part, p. 2006 ; Pocket Biographical and Bibliographical Dictionary, &c., vol. ii. p. 500, &c. See also "History of France in the Eighteenth Century," by Charles Lacretelle, Paris, 1821, vol. vii. p. 19. When details like these are inserted in general history they ought to be true, and free from calumny.

† And not six thousand, as stated by P. Chaussard, p. 25 of the "Summary" which precedes the "Esprit de Mirabeau," Paris, Buisson, Year V., 1797, first edition ; and also by the authors of the "New Biography of Contemporaries," by Arnault, Jay, Jouy, &c., vol. xiii. p. 348, second column. Even the pension of three thousand francs was liable to a very considerable reduction.

“ Our son will be married when you receive this ; he is under a father’s authority, as you are under that of a husband *.”

With regard to the Marquis of Mirabeau, he only granted a barren entail, and a pension of six thousand francs. Notwithstanding the expenses attendant upon a sumptuous wedding, the purchase of the bridal clothes, and the presents which local custom rendered it indispensable to make to the numerous female friends and companions of the bride, he did not, on this occasion, belie his usual parsimony†. He turned a deaf ear to his son’s entreaties, if we may judge by the following extract from a letter written by the timid steward to his haughty lord :—

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Marchioness of Mirabeau, dated June 14th 1772. Our conjectures are strengthened by the following passage in a letter from Mirabeau to his mother.

“ Whatever may have been the motives which prevented you from signing my marriage settlement, it was for me to be afflicted at the circumstance, and to respect the hand which chastised me, without the possibility of my heart believing that it was merited. You did not condescend to answer the letter in which I had the honour of informing you of my marriage I had hoped, from your kindness, that you would not disapprove of this alliance, although you did not think proper to sanction it even by your signature. I did not expect, nor think, that I had to encounter a silence, which appears to impose the same obligation upon me.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated August 18th 1772.*

† “ In fact, as Marignane gave one thousand francs less than he was to have given to Lavallette, I had no need to play the generous.”—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 2nd 1781.*

“ I have paid his draft of two hundred crowns ; this sum, if I may make bold to say it, appeared to me very trifling, when the great expenses are considered*.”

The Count was obliged to pay some notarial expenses, which his father obstinately refused to settle.

“ M. Raspaud (the notary) has called upon me for a heavy sum, for registry dues, and I had hoped that you would have passed it in my accounts, and have made this present to your son†.”

Even the friends of the Marquis met with no better success in their interference, and particularly his former companion in arms, M. de Saint-Cézaire‡.

Mirabeau, thus treated, was unable to resist the consequences of his necessitous situation, the effects of his liberal and even prodigal disposition, and also perfidious suggestions, if we may credit the assertions of his uncle the Bailli, who, eleven years subsequently wrote as follows :—

* Unpublished letter from Clapier, the steward, to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated June 24th 1772.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 27th 1772.

‡ Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 314. The brave Saint-Cézaire fell nine years after, in the fatal sea fight of the 12th of April 1781, when the Count of Grasse was vanquished and taken prisoner. This naval hero showed in that action, as he did on every other occasion, great bravery but little talent. This relates to the Count of Grasse Tilly (François Joseph Paul), Lieutenant-General of the naval forces, born in 1725, and who died January 11th 1788.

“ No sooner was he married, than every opportunity was sought to ruin him. He certainly laid himself open to these attacks, but matters have been exaggerated. You will perhaps reply, that I formerly said he degraded his name ; but this had been told me, and I was deceived by those very persons who, for a length of time, had been busily employed in unmarrying him*.”

Prior to the final settlement of the marriage, Mirabeau confessed to his father-in-law, the pecuniary embarrassments he laboured under; but the latter, whose affairs were by no means in good order, did not attach sufficient importance to this communication. Every day added fresh difficulties to Mirabeau's situation, by the accumulation of principal and interest on usurious loans, the fictitious capital of which was frequently swelled out with “trinkets, clothes, jewellery, as in Laflecke's bill†.”

Mirabeau, alarmed, and being well convinced that an application to his father would be fruitless, and that he should incur reproach and persecution, confided his situation to the Marquis of Marignane‡, who offered to

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 7th 1783.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 18th 1780. We need scarcely say, that this is in allusion to a scene in the second act of Moliere's “Avare.”

‡ This fact is doubly proved by the examination which we will mention, and by the pleadings of Mirabeau in Provence. (See especially p. 136 of the “Observations upon a defamatory libel called

advance him the sum of sixty thousand livres, the repayment of which was to have depended upon an event not yet accomplished, and of which nothing denoted the accomplishment. This decisive succour would have saved Mirabeau; but his father's consent was indispensable. An absolute refusal, accompanied with threats, was the only reply which the Marquis returned to the solicitations of his son, and the intercession of that son's father-in-law*.

Mirabeau being thus harassed by creditors whom it was out of his power to satisfy,—seeing also the impossibility of paying his debts, and preventing their rapid increase, and likewise the difficulty of receiving his scanty income, which was attached on all sides, quitted Aix, where his expenses were excessive, and sought refuge in the rustic solitude of his paternal castle, where, however, new dangers awaited him. Being desirous, on the one hand, of fitting up for his wife an apartment “which had already become antiquated in the time of his venerable great-grandmother, Anne of Pontevès †,” he very inconsiderately undertook

Brief and Counsel's Opinion on the Case of the Countess of Mirabeau,” Aix, 1738, Joseph David, 202 pp. 4to.)

* Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 37.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his sister, Madame du Saillant, dated November 14th 1772.

“The folly that this madman has committed, in heightening, wainscoting, and gilding for his wife the only chamber which suited me, put me very much out of my way, for I shall never find courage

alterations which cost three times the sum stated in the estimate. On the other hand, being beset at Mirabeau by a chaplain, a steward, and a farmer, all declared enemies of each other, he was dragged into law-suits by the chaplain, into compositions by the steward, whilst the farmer induced him to enter into undertakings which aggravated his embarrassments, increased his debts, and ultimately set his father entirely against him.

“His law-suit with the communities,” wrote the steward, “will absorb the revenue of the estate, and ruin the discipline of the vassals *.”

“His composition was,” according to the priest †, “a false step, an act of dangerous weakness,” and according to the steward ‡, “a master-stroke ;” they even went so far as to accuse him of dilapidating the castle and the estate, a charge, as usual, readily believed by his father §, and not contradicted for several years by

to inhabit an apartment resembling the Duke of Nivernois' drawing-room.”—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated July 4th 1777.*

* Unpublished letter from Boyer, the steward, dated December 13th 1772, to the Marquis of Mirabeau.

† Unpublished letter from the Abbé Castagny to the same, dated January 16th 1773.

‡ Unpublished letter from Boyer to the same, dated February 6th 1773.

§ Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 3rd 1782. This same steward, whose accusations against Mirabeau were so implicitly believed, had been previously

the Bailli, who at last wrote to his brother in the following terms:—

“ I have ascertained that he was calumniated, during his stay here, relative to the cutting down of the timber. The very persons who accused him, plundered the castle *. The facts which they succeeded in making you believe, are totally false. He neither cut down, nor sold any timber, nor disposed of any furniture †.”

We will now give a final explanation of the persecutions followed by such dreadful consequences

pointed out to the Marquis as a man against whom he ought to be on his guard.

“ Your steward by no means succeeded in blinding your son, no more than he succeeded in blinding me, during the survey of the estate, which took place by your order and mine. Your son perceived that he did not seek to inform us of every particular, and thought with me, that you pay for a great number of repairs which are beneficial only to the farmer.”—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated June 18th 1770.* We may remark here that this farmer was the steward's brother.

* “ Honoré was accused of spoliation by those very persons who sold the furniture: several peasants of the village are possessed of very fine linen.”—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 3rd 1782.*

“ You were, however, made to believe that I injured the Mirabeau estate. I wish that nobody had done more harm there than I did, and that your agents may have had no other motive for making me leave that place.”—*Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. i. p. 323.*

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 7th 1783. The father himself had written four years previously: “ that madman put every thing in disorder, but he brought more than he took away.”—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 14th 1779.*

quences for Mirabeau, by stating what was written to the Marquis.

“The Count unfortunately rejects good advice, and listens to bad. He suffers himself to be carried away by the empty sound and smoke of flatterers, who present fine schemes, prepare him work for a length of time, and then, as an excuse, plead his determination of character *.” At the very same period, one of the farmers asserted directly the reverse.

“With an advance of thirty thousand francs, the Count will be able to clear all the land, and effectually dam in the Durance †.”

It appears that Mirabeau was of the same opinion, for he afterwards wrote to his father—

“This undertaking would, in the course of ten years, I do not say, have paid my debts, but I mean to assert that it would have doubled the income from the Mirabeau estate, and the number of its inhabitants ‡.”

The Marquis, however, was as much inclined as ever, to disbelieve favourable accounts; but at the same time yielded the most implicit belief to accusations. Having procured a *lettre de cachet*, he

* Unpublished letter from the Abbé Castagny, to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated September 14th 1772.

† Letter from Farmer Thabot to the same, dated November 6th 1772.

‡ Paper by Mirabeau, addressed to his father, dated March 1st 1778. Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 323.

made use of it to order his son to leave the castle, and confine himself in the small town of Manosque.

Here it was that domestic sorrow and the most painful circumstances assailed the exile, but they afflicted without disheartening him. They did not prevent him from pursuing serious studies, and composing his first work, the "Essay on Despotism." Of this production we shall not speak at present, because it would interrupt the thread of our narrative, which requires to be connected, in order to be comprehensible.

A short time after, the Marquis of Mirabeau endeavoured to obtain a sentence of interdiction against his son.*.

* It was at this very time that the quarrels between the Marquis and the Marchioness, which had hitherto been kept nearly private, obtained a scandalous publicity in consequence of a law-suit. The Marquis's animosity is sufficiently well depicted in the following extract:—

"The voice of my ancestors has reached me, my spirit is roused, I raise my head, and have determined how to act. I have hitherto been guided by, and perhaps carried too far, a feeling of patience which was not in the blood of those whose representative I have the honour to be. This feeling would lead me to see and put up with the revolt of my family, to become notoriously the victim of their general impunity, and to see everything which has been confided to me dwindle away in my own hands. If Providence has decreed the downfall of my house, and this event happens during my unfortunate supremacy as its head, it must not, at all events, be imputed to weakness on my part. Too much vivacity, in the supposition that I can be accused of such a thing, will not be degenerating from the feeling and temper of my forefathers. A weak

We have in our possession Mirabeau's examination before the "local-lieutenant, performing (at Manosque) the duties of general-lieutenant, during the vacation of

and dastardly spirit would prove me unworthy of having succeeded them.

"I shall therefore begin, and make such a public exposure as is demanded by my situation and my honour, which, implicated as it is, can no longer tolerate half measures. If my children are afraid to witness it, they may retire. I shall not feel hurt; far from it: but if they remain, I forbid them, from this day, as their father and chief, ever to speak to me about this transaction, with reference either to the past or to the future, unless I call upon them to do so. With regard to my friends, a mournful silence will soon teach them that a man is desirous of being advised only to a certain extent. You alone have, and shall always possess the right of saying everything to me; but I hope that as you have, through your kindness, inhaled and swallowed the infection contained in this cup, with which in fact you had nothing to do, you will not disapprove of my having relieved you from the burthen. You will feel how unavailing the efforts of reason must prove in the midst of all this. You will allow me to speak, and support my load, and you will wait until I have exhausted my strength, before you relieve me. You will, above all, feel that when a man, from a sense of duty and honour, or from necessity, goes beyond the limits of his own disposition, he runs the risk, by the slightest check, of being overwhelmed with fatigue without the slightest benefit."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated January 1st 1774.*

We have transcribed this terrible manifesto merely to point out the beginning of a succession of lawsuits which are but too well known, and exercised too great an influence over Mirabeau's fate, to justify our omitting it here. But we refer to this unfortunate subject as seldom as possible, because the development of an episode so pregnant with scandal is in nowise necessary to the truth of our narrative.

the royal tribunal and Seneschal's jurisdiction of Forcalquier." We shall extract some particulars from this document, not only because it is unpublished, but also on account of its official and judicial character, which induces us to prefer it to the justification already mentioned, of the 1st of March 1778, published with the Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes. This justification is certainly more eloquently elaborate, but, in our opinion, it bears less the stamp of authenticity, inasmuch as it is addressed to the public, as much and perhaps more than to the Marquis. Besides, we may be allowed to suppose that Mirabeau made it as favourable to himself as possible, a thing he could not do in a judicial proceeding like that from which we have transcribed one of the documents.

"I protest," says Mirabeau, in the procès verbal of the sitting of the 9th of May 1774, "I protest against the competency of the tribunal (the Châtelet of Paris), in whose name I am interrogated; a tribunal one hundred and fifty leagues distant from the province in which I have resided ever since my marriage, a province in which, and in no other place, without any exception, my creditors are to be found, as is also the proof of my debts.

"I do not pretend to act against my father's will, which I shall ever consider a sacred and inviolable law; but I trust my protest will prove that my submis-

sion is to be attributed solely to filial respect, since I am not ignorant of the means to which I can have recourse in my defence before the law of the land.

“ Let me be allowed, before I reply to the different questions about to be put to me, and in reference also to the above protest, to invoke the paternal clemency with regard to my answers, which will no doubt be submitted to my first master and natural judge. To him I dare appeal, and ask, whether my heart is hardened and depraved, and whether the irregularities of my past life prove incontestibly and for ever the delirium of my mind. Him I will dare ask what man would not have been ruined, if his maturer age was judged by the aberrations of his youthful years, however wild and impetuous they may have been? My conduct has been foolish and reprehensible—I confess it without shame: let the judge now deign to listen to the observations which may plead in extenuation of my errors, diminish their consequences, and suspend the sentence which the court is about to pronounce.

“ It is true that I have contracted a great number of liabilities, the amount of which shall be presently specified; but to be liable and to owe are two very different things. The most scrupulously honourable man must not blindly present his head to the usurer’s sword. I have spent a great deal too much; nevertheless my expenditure has been moderate in proportion to my engagements. But, it may be said: What more

certain proof can we have of your madness than the circumstance of your having contracted liabilities for enormous sums, when those you actually received were trifling? The history of my debts becomes here indispensably necessary: it will prove, that after I had taken the first step, it became almost impossible for me not to fall into the extreme of difficulty. And where is the man presumptuous enough to hope that he shall never commit a first fault? If such a one exist, let him cast the accusing stone at me."

We here terminate our extract, and continue it only in a note *, because the particulars which

* "Family circumstances prevented my father from giving me more than six thousand francs a year when I married. The Countess of Mirabeau brought me only three thousand. I saw everything with the eyes of a young man of twenty, and I expected a larger income. My hopes were never realised, and the illusions in which I had indulged, did not vanish with them. I had married a young lady of quality, and through my connexion with her respectable family I became allied to a great many persons in a province where I have myself numerous relatives. The greater number of these were present at my marriage, which took place at Aix, the provincial capital. I married a lady who had a right to hope that her children would be heirs to great wealth. I thought myself obliged to make her amends for the privations to which my limited income would subject her. I did not calculate the expenses attending the frivolous enjoyments of the moment. If this sometimes occupied my thoughts I always dismissed the reflections it occasioned. I should have been much more humiliated at the idea of not yielding something to ostentation on the occasion of my marriage, because at first I made much greater offers than my father has been able to fulfil.

" My uncle was good enough to load the Countess of Mirabeau

follow would appear a sort of repetition of a preceding part of our narrative. We therefore proceed directly to the conclusion of the document.

with presents; but I, very inconsiderately, made a great addition to them. The custom in Provence prescribes presents to all persons present at the wedding. A man is rigorously obliged to conform to this usage, and I did it with ruinous prodigality. The state of my father's affairs did not allow him to advance me any money; I was thus necessarily obliged to have recourse to loans. The ruinous but easy resources which young men of family find under such circumstances are well known. They offer no attractions to a man in his cool and collected moments; but coolness and collectedness do not exist in cases of emergency. A red-hot bar of iron tempts a drowning man—such was my situation. As a bachelor, I had incurred debts: I had been five months at Aix, with my father's approbation, as I was negotiating a marriage to which he had given his consent. His agents certainly did not remit me so much as twenty-five louis. I had arrived with a single coat, after a residence of six weeks in the country; and I was obliged to clothe myself, and to live respectably, on coming to reside at Aix. When to these accumulated and ruinous debts were added the engagements contracted at the period of my marriage, the whole was more than sufficient to overwhelm me. It became utterly impossible to establish anything like order amid this confusion, without the aid of my family. I saw nothing before me but the most imminent misfortunes; I was alarmed at the depth of the abyss into which I was about to plunge. A foolish shame prevented me from revealing in time the deranged state of my finances, and throwing myself at my parent's feet. I had begun in thoughtlessness, I continued through necessity, I ended in weakness; and when I spoke it was too late. My father-in-law wished to lend me a helping hand. In my marriage settlement he had engaged to give me sixty thousand livres, at a period which I pray heaven long to avert. He offered to advance them to me in order to pay my debts, and at that time such a sum would have been more than sufficient to liquidate them. He agreed to advance them to me on condition that my father would give

“ I have stated everything ; I have disguised neither my errors nor my faults, nor the different revolutions in my conduct and mind, nor the innermost feelings of my heart. That heart, carried away by an impetuous imagination, has not, however, been led astray : I dare assert it.

“ One question more, and I will submit everything, my personal liberty, my reputation, my honour—(and all these, my moral possessions, are dearer to me than life itself)—I submit them to my father, whose authority I will never challenge. Is it possible to conclude from the conduct of a man of three-and-twenty, what he will be when he has become the father of a family ? Is it even possible to judge from one year to another, during the frenzy of youth, in the first exacerbation of

him a receipt for the amount, because, by a clause in my marriage settlement, my father alone could receive my wife's dower. Alas ! I was staying with my father-in-law, and had interested him in my favour ; my father was far from me, and he saw me only with prejudice. Fears for the future, perhaps well founded, for a person who could not penetrate into the feelings of my heart, overcame his natural goodness, and he refused. Yes, my father, let your son believe that you would have assisted him had you known him better ; had you witnessed his contrition. Let him believe, that if he had not had the misfortune to be estranged from your affection, he would not have been lost for you and himself. I acknowledge my error : I saw nothing but injustice and violent passion, in refusals where I ought to have seen only the vigilant care of a parent. Despair threw me into the whirlpool which has caused my ruin. I wished to rouse myself when it was no longer time. My father has punished me, and his arm is still uplifted against me.”

burning passions, of a man who is destitute of neither good sense nor good feeling, and in less than a year has experienced every species of anxiety, all the humiliation attendant on a broken fortune, and has found himself obliged to drag his wife with him into ruin, and thus endanger the life of the mother and nurse of his child, the peace and happiness of his father, his uncle, and his father-in-law, that is to say, of every one he holds dearest in the world? The thing is impossible; and were this a friend's cause, I would plead it triumphantly before the tribunals. I appeal to you, my father, for your heart is more just and indulgent than all the tribunals in the world. I will not repeat here what I have ventured to write to you. It is you alone I require as my judge. I have said enough to rouse your paternal feelings; they will prove my best advocate, and I will neither speak to other magistrates, nor withdraw myself from your authority. If my errors, however great—if my conduct, however reprehensible, have been aggravated in your opinion, be your own judge, and believe that you are the only man whom your son respects sufficiently to address him thus. I know that to appeal to you as my judge is to awaken your generosity, throw you back upon your own feelings, and prevent you from acting a part too much beneath your personal and paternal dignity—that of my adversary. I have dared to offer you, and I here authenticate the offer in the presence of

the public prosecutor, to pay my debts with the sum of sixty thousand livres, ready money, the interest to be paid out of my income. What have you to fear? If my past conduct will not warrant your placing this sum at my disposal, confide it to any person you please. Besides, are you no longer my father? Who can withdraw me from your authority? Cannot the public prosecutor watch and arrest me? What security will you ever have of my repentance, if you deprive me of my civil rights? This is the last trial you owe to me, and to yourself: allow me to say so.

* * * * *

“I have now, with the lieutenant’s permission, to lay at your feet, O my father, the assurance of the profound respect, ardent affection, and unalterable obedience which my heart feels towards you, as strongly as nature herself has imposed them as a duty. Open your paternal arms to me once more. Receive your son, who submits entirely to your will, and claims only your indulgence.”

Such is the substance of the examination which preceded the sentence of interdiction pronounced against Mirabeau. In his defence from the Donjon of Vincennes, he informs us* that the Marquis found his answers silly. The reader may judge of them by the

* Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, Paris, 1792, vol. i. p. 325.

foregoing extract. The son maintained that they were "full of respect" towards his father; and indeed, our extracts, far from proving the contrary, place Mirabeau, in our opinion, in a most interesting and favourable light. To him the shame of an interdiction was "a dreadful blow*"; he had conceived a most humiliating idea of this formality†," but, on the present occasion, he made his natural impetuosity, and the consciousness of his right, yield to the respect which he felt for a father, always unjust and always irritated.

Thus, after more than a year of correct conduct, Mirabeau was judicially interdicted, under pretence of his dissipation, which had ceased, and for which his father had already punished him, without occupying himself in the least with the payment of his debts. These, on the contrary, increased every day from arrears of interest. But the Marquis's animosity was not satisfied with the sentence of interdiction; he obtained a letter of exile. Mirabeau had retired voluntarily to Manosque, and was now forcibly detained there. The fault which caused him to absent himself for an instant,—a fault not only natural, but even doubly honourable, as we shall presently show,—threw him into a career of misfortune, which from that period became interminable and beyond remedy. A young man, the Chevalier Gassaud,

* Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, Paris, 1792, vol. i. p. 325.

† Idem.

a relative of the Countess of Mirabeau, had, previously to her marriage, kept up a sort of epistolary correspondence with her, breathing much less of passion than of playful wit on his part, and much love of admiration on hers. The Chevalier continued to visit Mirabeau at Manosque. The resentment of a discharged servant roused the irritable temper of the husband, and inspired him with a strong feeling of jealousy, a passion, like all others, susceptible of extremes. A part of the correspondence was discovered, and adroitly commented upon; a violent altercation ensued, a duel seemed inevitable, and Mirabeau's well known expertness at the sword created much alarm. The parents of the supposed gallant interfered; his father, who was not an always irritated judge, begged for "his son's life." Mirabeau's generosity was awakened, he resisted his own violent feelings, and accepted from the father the plausible explanations offered. Without heeding blustering provocations, he silenced the son with dignity. At that moment, he learned that the publicity of the quarrel was on the point of breaking off an advantageous match between the Chevalier Gassaud and the daughter of the Marquis of Tourette. He blamed himself for this consequence of his momentary error, and felt alarmed lest the Countess of Mirabeau's reputation should suffer*. Feeling himself quite

* "I continue to render every service to the person who is the subject of this correspondence, because, in the public opinion,

certain of the ascendancy which the rights of friendship gave him at the castle of Tourette, he left his house clandestinely, and in a few hours reached the castle, more than twenty leagues distant. He warmly pleaded the chevalier's cause, and by his irresistible eloquence, succeeded in placing the projected marriage upon the same footing as before. He then set out, happy, to return to the place of his exile*.

such service is connected with my wife's reputation."—*Statement by the Count of Mirabeau*, suppressed at the moment of its publication, &c., p. 8.

"I did not wish to be generous by halves; fearing that the reputation of my wife, the mother and nurse of my son, might be injured, I resolved to set out for Grasse, notwithstanding the king's orders, which forbade me to leave Manosque. Fatal journey! source of all my misfortunes!"—*Observations of the Count of Mirabeau upon a point of his case*, Aix, André Adibert, 1783, p. 34. We must here remark that these declarations, made during legal proceedings, exposed to contradictions which Mirabeau's adversary did not dare to offer, present quite a different character of authenticity from his own account of the transaction, without a chance of contradiction—*Original Letters from Vincennes*, vol. i. p. 339. This is the reason why, according to our usual custom, we do not seek our evidence in the letter.

* Peuchet, Mirabeau's principal biographer, has expressed some doubts respecting this fact, vol. i. pp. 113—115. We shall not stop to refute this opinion, our preceding extracts being more than sufficient for that purpose, but shall only remark that he brings forward no evidence in support of the conjectures suggested by his mania of weakening every favourable circumstance, and expatiating upon every error. We here confine ourselves to the remark, without fearing contradiction, that Peuchet had but an imperfect knowledge of Mirabeau, whose history he wrote merely to compile a large volume from other books, and that he was not formed to compre-

By an unfortunate chance, he met, on his way, the Baron Villeneuve Moans.

“ This man, for these last twenty years, had law-suits, both civil and criminal, with his brother-in-law, the Marquis of Latour Roumoules, whom he had nearly ruined in this war of chicanery. The Marchioness of Cabris, the Count of Mirabeau’s sister, moved by the situation of her relative, the Count of Latour, offered him every consolation and service that friendship could suggest. This was more than sufficient to render her the object of the Baron’s hatred. He availed himself of the opportunity offered by a prosecution, in which the Marquis of Cabris was implicated with almost the whole town of Grasse, where he resided*; and under pretence of taking part in the public quarrel, grossly insulted the Marchioness of Cabris, at a public place†. The Count of Mirabeau

hend what in a character like Mirabeau’s, energetic, and forming a perfect exception to the general rule, was essentially different in its motives and acts from those of ordinary men.

* It appears that the young Marquis of Cabris was accused of being the author of “ some defamatory verses, printed at Nice, and publicly placarded at Grasse, in which insults were lavished upon the most respectable inhabitants of the town.”—*Explanatory paper annexed to an unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 7th 1779.*

† This account, which our private correspondence entirely confirms, destroys the imaginary suppositions in which Peuchet has indulged vol. i. p. 115, in order to compose an odious, we may even say, an infamous romance, founded upon an event of which he wanted to speak, without any knowledge of the circumstances, and without

demanding that satisfaction which is expected between gentlemen. Baron Moans, replied with an extraordinary mixture of insolence and cowardice; for after all, the least a man can do is to be humble, if he be a coward. A short time after, the Count of Mirabeau, having met the Baron of Moans, as we have already stated, chastised him with a horsewhip. Unfortunately some peasants witnessed the transaction, which the Baron of Moans bravely authenticated by a criminal prosecution. He dishonoured himself, it is true, but he had not in that respect much to lose, and the Count of Mirabeau found himself involved in the greatest difficulty, because the judicial inquiry proved him to have been absent from his place of exile. The affair was judged by the tribunal at Grasse, before a subaltern judge, a vassal of the plaintiff, more than two years after the quarrel, whilst Mirabeau was out of the kingdom, and without any defence having been furnished on his part. The first judgment condemned him, by default, to six thousand francs damages, and to reparation towards the tribunal. In other words, Baron Moans' dishonour was solemnly confirmed by an authentic sentence*.

taking the trouble to recur to those very sources whence he has nevertheless so largely drawn, in order to compose without much trouble four large volumes.

* Unpublished manuscript additions to the statement of the 1st of March 1778, inserted in the *Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes*, vol. i. p. 287.

This was the origin of Mirabeau's second confinement*, and to this confinement, are to be traced, not his first misfortunes, for we have shown that, from his very youth, he was unfortunate, but the first truly culpable act of which he was guilty. This circumstance induced us to interrupt our narrative for an instant, in order to characterise a fact, by no means extraordinary in this family, in which impetuosity and excitement seemed endemic diseases of the blood. The incident we have mentioned, insignificant and even frivolous in itself, produced dreadful consequences. We must remark that it was deemed unimportant, so long as it was not wanted as a pretence for excessive rigour.

"It was you who wrote. Let us forget M. de Villeneuve and his dung. You know that my father-in-law wrote to me after having read a paper on that subject†, that the strongest document which could

* Unpublished manuscript additions to the justification of the 1st of March 1778, inserted in the Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 193, 337; vol. iii. p. 583.

† This paper has not reached us, although Mirabeau sent it to his mother, as mentioned in a letter in our possession, and although it appears in the inventory of his personal estate. But we find in the "Dialogues" mentioned in the "Letters from Vincennes," vol. i. p. 44, 110, 116; vol. ii. p. 106; vol. iii. pp. 154, 231, 248; vol. iv. p. 134, that a printed copy found its way even to Franche-Comté, and greatly interested Madame de Monnier, who became acquainted with the author only six months later. He says to his mother, relative to this paper, in the letter we have just quoted—

"You will receive by the next post, that is to say, by Friday's mail, a copy of a paper relative to the affair of M. de Villeneuve,

appear for my defence was M. de Villeneuve's own petition. You know that all the Villeneuves were the first to praise my conduct in the business; that the old Marquis, who had become, in a manner, the head of that family, wrote to me as follows: 'Rely upon it, I shall always make an immense difference between a friend whose conduct, upon every important occasion, is as correct as yours, and a relative who would disgrace his family name, if infamy were not entirely personal *.' "

Finally, we have similar evidence in two letters from the Bailli of Mirabeau, although he was greatly irritated against his nephew. This arose both from the suggestions of the Marquis, which had an all-powerful influence over his mind, and the error which Mirabeau had committed just at the time the first of these letters was written:

"What is there so extraordinary in the grand-nephew of our uncles, and the grandson of our fathers, having taken the trouble to dust with a horsewhip the jacket of an insolent self-styled nobleman, who had the said jacket upon his back, and who thought proper to

together with the vouchers; it will show you the iniquity of which I have been made the victim, the manner in which I behaved, whether it is credible for a father to abandon such an affair, and whether I can make it up as long as I have breath in my body." — *Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated January 30th 1776.*

* Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 336.

inform the Marshals of France of the trouble which the Count had taken to dust it*. But enough of this; let us talk no more of the affair of Moans. This man was in the wrong, for he provoked your madman; and if I had been in the situation in which Gabriel's sister had placed him, I am not sure I should not have acted as he did†.”

In our turn we say :—

“ Let us now dismiss this silly episode,” of which we hear no more until after a lapse of eight years, when it was mentioned in a letter from the Bailli. He had formerly termed it “ an unexampled misdeed‡.”

He afterwards wrote to his brother in the following terms :—

“ I must confess that Baron Moans, although he asserts that he will not take any legal steps, will not, he says, withdraw his prosecution until his expenses are paid. What a dignified nobleman § !”

To this the Marquis replied :—

“ With regard to the affair of Moans, I am of opinion that it is one of those disgraceful things which

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis de Mirabeau, dated May 4th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated July 25th 1776.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated August 28th 1780.

§ Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated October 29th 1782.

ought to be forgotten, and that this valiant lord would feel himself much embarrassed to recommence his rascally suit*.”

We must here remark, with sorrow, and for the last time, the consequences of this act, so truly insignificant, that it would have been very easy to obliterate them altogether, but that it was judged expedient they should be turned to account. Mirabeau, himself, pointed out a simple mode of counteracting them, in the following passage from the Vincennes correspondence:—

“Supposing I do not choose to appeal from a judgment, which, although given against me by default, is as honourable for me as it is degrading for my adversary : I should get rid of it altogether by giving him six thousand livres †.”

Be that as it may, the punishment soon followed. On the 6th of June 1774, Mirabeau was taken from his home, where his child was then lying dangerously ill ‡, and on the 23rd of August following was imprisoned in the castle of If, a barren rock, with a gloomy citadel extending over its entire surface, and rising a little above the level of the sea. It is situated towards the entrance of, and at some distance from, the

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 15th 1782.

† Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. i. p. 9.

‡ Idem, vol. ii. p. 359.

port of Marseilles. Mirabeau allowed himself to be conducted thither, after having refused the means of escape, and pecuniary assistance offered him by a friend *. But his imprisonment was not the consequence of a condemnation, since, as we have just stated, sentence was passed only two years after; nor the result of public rumour, since every body, even including the family of the horse-whipped gentleman, concurred in blaming the prosecution, and despising his cowardice. Neither did it proceed from a spontaneous order of the sovereign and ministerial authority, against whose prohibitions Mirabeau had, however, doubly transgressed. The true author of this detention was the Marquis of Mirabeau, who demanded an order for his son's imprisonment "for having left the place of his banishment, also as a kind of satisfaction to the nobles of the province †, and in order to

* Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. i. p. 343. The account given by Mirabeau himself to his father is too characteristic not to find a place here.

"I might have avoided coming to the Castle of If, had I been inclined to resist your authority. A friend had procured me a post-chaise; he pressed me to accept a hundred louis, and fly to the place of refuge he had prepared for me. I resisted his offers, I resisted the alluring call of freedom; I patiently submitted to the brutality of the satellites who arrested me, as if I had been a cut-purse. I allowed myself to be conducted to the Castle of If; but it was not for the purpose of there losing the fruits of my submission."

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated December 3rd 1778.

reserve to himself the right of soliciting, at a subsequent period, his son's release *."

It would thus appear that Mirabeau had merely to undergo the punishment inflicted by the chief of his family, and yet we find in the justification dated March 1st 1778, inserted at the end of the first volume of the correspondence from Vincennes, that he complains of the severity which the commandant was instructed to display towards him, by which he was deprived of all news, debarred from all communication with persons outside †, expressly forbidden to write ‡. Thus was an excess of severity, hardly conceivable in the case of a state prisoner, really applied to a man imprisoned from motives of paternal discipline. But did he not, it may be asked, exaggerate the statement of his situation, with a view that it should come, in an indirect manner, under the eyes of ministerial authority, and highly colour the hardships he endured, in order to excite compassion? The following extract will remove all doubts upon the subject.

" When I asked for the imprisonment of this man,

* Manuscript notes upon the Minutes of the Justification, dated March 1st 1778, and letters from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis of Cabris, the father of his son-in-law, and to the Countess of Rochefort, dated August 13th and September 6th 1774.

† P. 342.

‡ P. 347.

I took care to request that all correspondence should be denied to him *. You know how strictly, and justly so, I had him kept at the castle of If, with regard to correspondence. Well! in the gaiters of peasants, letters were concealed, and conveyed to him, and the answers were returned between the leg and the gaiter †."

The Countess of Mirabeau was then at the Bignon, whither her husband had sent her, in the beginning of August, to endeavour to avert the imprisonment with which he was threatened. She quitted this place on her return to Aix, after the removal of Mirabeau, whom she refused to join, both at the castle of If, and the castle of Joux, and whom she never afterwards saw. At the period to which we refer, her testimony furnishes us with fresh evidence of the excessive rigour of her husband's captivity.

"My father-in-law wished to exact from me my word, that I would not take charge of any letter; I gave a downright refusal, saying that I should not be able to keep my promise, being unable and unwilling to refuse you any thing ‡."

Let us now examine the effect of this extraordinary

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 11th 1776.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated October 14th 1776.

‡ Letter from the Countess of Mirabeau to her husband, dated September 13th 1774, p. 7, of the "Observations for the Count of Mirabeau, &c." Aix, J. David, 1783.

mode of treatment, upon Mirabeau, with whose impetuosity and spirit of independence we are perfectly well acquainted.

“You make me violate my oath, my dear sister. My father has written to M. Dallègre (commandant of the castle of If), that the king’s order did not except himself, nor my uncle, nor any one, from the prohibition I was under respecting writing. I did not expect this fresh instance of severity, and in the bitterness of my heart, I swore to hold no communication with any of my relatives, since my father rejected me with a kind of horror. I cannot, however, refrain from the pleasure of writing you a few lines, to thank you, with tears, and to assure you that my persecutors will make me break my heart, before they succeed in hardening it. You dare not own it, but you well know that I have not deserved the treatment I endure. Indeed, I should only laugh at it, were not my father the instigator of it. But to languish during four months in captivity with a set of miscreants, without being able to write a single word to my judge and natural protector; to encounter at once every species of suffering, and to lose in a single moment every consolation, is a misfortune against which I shall not be able long to bear up*.”

The prisoner’s sister was not the only person who

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his sister, Madame du Saillant, dated January 12th 1775.

felt interest in his fate. The same feeling actuated their brother, the Chevalier, who afterwards acquired much celebrity under the name of Viscount Mirabeau, and at the period to which we allude, was twenty years old. He learnt, at Malta, the quarrel which served as the pretence for his brother's imprisonment; and although suffering from illness, he immediately set out and arrived at Marseilles.

“The wind was excessively high, not a single captain would put to sea. I succeeded in deciding two of them, more by threats than by money, for you know I am not overburthened with cash, whilst I have, thank God, a plentiful stock of hard words. I arrived at the castle of If, the gates were closed, and the lieutenant, in the absence of Dallègre, quietly informed me that I must return as I came.

“‘Not so, if you please, without having seen Gabriel.’—‘He is not to be seen.’—‘I will write to him.’—‘Just as impossible.’—‘I will then wait for M. Dallègre.’—‘Be it so, but only four and twenty hours, not more.’

“Thereupon I made up my mind, and calling upon Mother Mouret (a female sutler), we agreed that in the evening, after the retreat, I should see the poor devil. I went, therefore, not like a noble knight, but like a pickpocket, or like a lover, just as you please, and we immediately set to. It had been feared that he would have heated my brain up to the pitch of his own.

Justice is not done him; and I here declare that when he had spoken to me of his case, and the indignation excited by his bare account, had burst forth in these words: 'But although I am yet weak, I have arms, and they are still good enough to break, if not those of M. de Villeneuve, at least those of his brothers,'—he said to me, 'My dear friend, you would ruin us both;' and I confess to you that this consideration alone prevented me from executing a project, sufficiently ill-conceived, and which the fermentation of a harum-scarum fellow like myself can alone excuse*."

At the castle of If, at the Abbé Choquart's, at the island of Rhé, in his regiment, and at the Bailli's, Mirabeau's arrival had always been preceded by letters from the Marquis, exaggerating the faults, and errors, and blackening the character of his son. But at the castle of If, as every where else, the prejudices against Mirabeau soon gave way to the ascendancy exercised by his happy temper, to his captivating frankness, and to the interest excited by the unceasing persecution directed against him. His wife, at that period residing at the castle of Bignon, the very source of these persecutions, wrote to the prisoner in the following terms:—

* Unpublished letter from Viscount Mirabeau to his sister, the Marchioness of Cabris, dated November 1st 1774. This excursion of the Chevalier's is mentioned in a letter written a fortnight after, by the Countess of Mirabeau."—*Observations upon the Defamatory Libel*, &c., p. 160.

"I am struck with admiration, my dear friend, at the patience you display in your unfortunate situation. No man possesses more strength of mind than you do, under the pressure of misfortune *."

Mirabeau had, moreover, profited by the good advice she had given him.

"Employ, my dearest angel, that magic which you possess to such a degree when you wish to enchant any one†."

After several months spent in various occupations, Mirabeau inspired the commandant Dallègre with feelings of regard which the latter expressed with great warmth.

"Although," as he said, "his regard for the Count had exposed him to much annoyance‡," the kind-hearted commandant advocated his prisoner's cause.

"The whole province is aware, Marquis, of your decision that the Count of Mirabeau's release shall depend upon my report of his good conduct. It will therefore be sufficient for me to make my profession of faith, since that is to procure his release. I am persuaded that this document will produce a strong effect upon the heart of the 'Friend of men,' who has himself

* Letter from the Countess of Mirabeau to her husband, dated October 24th 1774.

† Letter from the Countess of Mirabeau to her husband, dated September 20th 1774.

‡ Letter from M. Dallègre to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated May 19th 1775.

given such excellent lessons of humanity. The boon I solicit is in favour of a son, who by his resignation to your will, deserves the love of a respectable father, venerated by the whole of Europe.

“ Receive then the most authentic attestation, that since the imprisonment of the Count of Mirabeau in the castle of If, he has never given the slightest cause of complaint to any one. His conduct has always been perfectly correct. He has submitted with admirable mildness, to the means I adopted to put his impetuosity to the trial *, and he will carry with him the esteem, friendship, and respect of every body here †.”

As we have resolved upon excluding from our history all the scandal we can avoid, without failing in our duty as faithful biographers, we shall not expatiate upon an incident much talked of eight years after, pending the action for a separation which Mirabeau brought against his wife. A young woman, the wife of a sutler, was said to have been seduced by him, and the

* Letter from M. Dallègre to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated June 24th 1775.

† Letter, already quoted, from the same to the same, dated May 19th 1775. The reader may desire to know the effect which these attestations produced upon the Marquis of Mirabeau's mind. This is what he afterwards said respecting them—

“ I well knew what I had to expect when M. Dallègre gave him a certificate *quid potui facere vinæ meæ et non feci*. Believe me, nothing is to be done with such people, except tying a stone to their necks.”—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 1st 1779.*

story went on to state that he supplied her with the means of robbing her husband and escaping from his authority. These imputations, afterwards repeated from hatred * or ignorance †, were entirely destroyed by the letters of the commandant Dallègre, and by the written confession of the sutler himself, a confession afterwards published, in which he explained the error into which the real thief had led him. There remained, therefore, nothing from all these scandalous proceedings but evidence of a calumnious accusation, and the probability of a momentary connexion, which between a young female sutler, and an officer of five and twenty, alone and in prison, can scarcely be construed into a criminal seduction ‡.

As the letters of the commandant Dallègre prove the condition on which the father himself had made his son's liberty to depend, was thus accomplished. He himself confessed that he was behind "the royal authority §," which, thanks to his all powerful in-

* Brief and Counsel's Opinion on the Case of the Countess of Mirabeau, Aix, J. B. Mouret, jun. 1783, 162 pp. 4to. pp. 11—18.

† We shall only quote Peuchet, who, employing every means to swell out his book, filled twelve octavo pages with extracts and comments on this scandalous episode, vol. i. p. 122—135.

‡ All this refutation is most incontrovertibly proved in the "Observations on a Defamatory Libel, called 'Brief and Counsel's Opinion in the Case of the Countess of Mirabeau,'" Aix, Joseph David, 1783, 202 pp. See pp. 147—170.

§ Letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis of Mari-

fluence, was the supreme arbiter of his adversary's fate. Mirabeau had been severely tried, and had triumphed over the ordeal. His conduct was irreproachable. With regard to the circumstances which served as a pretence for his imprisonment, his debts were under examination by a firm and prudent relative sent for that express purpose to the spot *. On the other hand, the irregular condemnation obtained against him by the horse-whipped Baron, was about to be brought, by appeal, before those whom Mirabeau termed "his natural judges, the true magistracy †:" that is to say, the ancient parliament, which he had never ceased to regret, and the re-establishment of which would abolish those newly created magistrates, of Chancellor Maupeou's invention, after the bold stroke of policy of 1770; magistrates whom Mirabeau, following the example of all his family, had always considered intruders, and on that account despised and abused ‡. The chances he now had were the more favourable

gnane, dated October 11th 1774, p. 9. of the "Brief and Counsel's Opinion in the Case of the Countess of Mirabeau." Aix, J. B. Mouret, jun., 1783, 163 pp. 4to.

* Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 352.

† Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 348.

‡ Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. pp. 327—330. Near the period which now occupies us, Mirabeau thus publicly expressed himself on this subject:—

"Nothing was now wanting but to annihilate this magistracy, or what is still more tyrannical and dangerous, if possible, to degrade

because he was near Marseilles, within reach of part of his family, surrounded by friends, and placed under

it. This is certainly the proper place to say a word respecting this formidable act of authority.

“ At the time of the destruction of the parliaments, at the period of that singular revolution which took place of itself, as it were, and cost the person who appeared the author of it merely the trouble of availing himself of the long slavery of the French people at this time, a great many strangers applauded what was improperly termed the new system. Nor is this to be wondered at.

“ They saw in this change nothing but the abolition of the venality of office, (an abuse almost intolerable to the reasonable mind, and to be found only in France,) and the establishment of the self-called ‘ gratuitous justice;’ a gross delusion with which that despicable minister, Maupeou, wished to lure the nation, although his incapacity and sordid avarice did not allow him long to carry on the deception. But what every enlightened man ought to feel, was the manifest and authentic violation of so much vested property. Now, all kinds of property are inseparably connected together, like links of one chain, and are equally sacred; he who attacks one is a public enemy, for by that very act he attacks them all.

“ Four centuries do not produce four men capable of foreseeing to what extent innovations may go; hence we must infer that changes and new constitutive establishments are always delicate in their operation, and seldom unattended with danger.

“ It required no great stretch of foresight to be aware that men, almost all of whom have no interest in the public weal, base enough to plunder their fellow citizens, and to impose upon themselves the frightful duty of deciding upon the life and property of their fellow countrymen, without having acquired any knowledge of the law, having but a brief, precarious, and degraded existence—that men, receiving wages from the court, fawning slaves of the king, or what is still worse, of his chancellor, could not possess the strength and courage which enabled their predecessors to struggle against the arbitrary acts of royal authority, and to instruct the

the authority of a superior, who was his natural bail, and whose protection, as we have just shown, would not be wanting to his unfortunate client.

Whatever might have been the effect of these circumstances, or rather with a view of preventing this effect, Mirabeau's removal was determined upon. The Marquis had already expressed his will upon this head.

“ My intention is now to try him in good earnest, and in my own way ; he is where he ought to be (at the castle of If,) and shall remain there. Supposing a miracle should take place, and that he could contain himself so far as to induce the commandant to become surety for his good behaviour and repentance,” (the miracle had taken place,) “ I shall then remove him to some citadel, where he will have to live with one who will put him to the test. Supposing another miracle makes him overcome this second ordeal, I shall have others ready for him, and so on by degrees. This is the only new proof of patience I can grant, in consideration of his being a husband and a father ;—this is all *.”

nation by their resistance; that if even they did possess this courage they had neither the right nor the power to exercise it, for the very reason that I discharge my footman when he disobeys me.”—*Essay on Despotism*, p. 257. Let it be remembered that Mirabeau was not twenty-three years of age when he wrote these bold lines.

* Unpublished letter, already quoted, from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis of Marignane, dated October 11th 1774.

Mirabeau was apprised by his wife of his approaching removal.

“ I was yesterday entreating your father, as usual ; he told me that I should at length be satisfied, and that until your affairs took a turn which would allow of something more being done, you were going to a much more suitable place than the castle of If. In vain did I beg to be informed of the place to which you are to be removed *.”

The name of this place was in fact kept secret.

“ M. Duveyrier †, commissioned to convey me to my new abode, was charged to conceal from me whither I was going. He asked me to pledge my word that I would not escape : I replied that prisoners of war alone gave their parole, and I had never heard

* Letter from the Countess to the Count of Mirabeau, dated April 27th 1775, p. 20, of “ Observations for the Count of Mirabeau.”

† It appears that M. Duveyrier, whom we find in our correspondence, sometimes termed Lieutenant of Maréchaussée, sometimes Lieutenant of the Provost (these two situations were certainly compatible), was usually employed on these commissions, for we read further on :—

“ Yesterday I saw M. Duveyrier, on his return from conducting the Lady Rongelime (Madame de Cabris) to her convent, at Sisteron.”—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 1st 1778.*

“ M. Duveyrier, who is an honest gentleman, must know how to appreciate this race, for it was he who conducted the madman to the fortress of Joux.”—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 10th 1778.*

that state prisoners were required to give theirs. I desired to see the orders ; he showed them to me, and I learnt that I was going to be banished among the bears of Mount Jura. The neighbourhood of Switzerland thus appeared to me your only motive. I resisted my repugnance and presentiments, and quietly followed my conductor, who was unprovided with any escort. I had pistols about me, he had none. In this manner, I crossed the whole kingdom. You know the account he gave of my conduct, and you see I was resolved to endeavour once more to move you by my resignation *."

A letter from the Marquis informs us that Mirabeau had reached his journey's end.

"My madman has arrived at Pontarlier, and is in the hands of the Count of Saint-Mauris, a man of quality (those are the only proper people to deal with), with whose letters I am perfectly satisfied †."

* Paper addressed by Mirabeau to his father. See letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 352.

"I arrived voluntarily, and without an escort, at the Castle of Joux."—*First Brief and Counsel's Opinion on the Case of the Count of Mirabeau against the Marquis of Monnier*, p. 2 of the 12mo edition. This twice repeated assertion is confirmed by the following passage found in a letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 31st 1782.

"It is true that M. Duveyrier was alone, and he told me that your son had opportunities of escaping."

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 29th 1775.

We have just stated what Mirabeau himself terms his resignation ; a very remarkable proof undoubtedly of his sense of the errors he had committed, and of the sway exercised by a good heart over the most impetuous temper, and the most independent mind that ever existed *. This proof is the more striking because he was perfectly conscious of his true situation, and of his rights as a man, a husband, and a father. He felt the disproportion between the fault and the punishment. Indeed, he thus expressed himself at a later period—

“For after all, why was I confined in a fortress? I was certainly no longer a child: I began to know my language, and to appreciate the value of both words and things. I did not, I could not deem myself a criminal †.”

The Bailli himself, who, not having seen the prisoner for two years, was more than ever under the spell of his brother's influence, looking up to this brother as to an oracle, wrote to him in the following terms—

“Have a care. People persist in thinking you rather harsh towards your family. Your son, in the eyes

* This is the same man who said of himself—

“If he knew me he would be aware that I am never loud in my anger. I would knock down a wall, or bite red-hot cannon balls, but I utter no cries.”—*Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes*, vol. iii. p. 450.

† *Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes.*

of the public, appears guilty only of having contracted debts; and to say the truth, the youth of the present day have taken a singular turn in this respect. If every young man who has debts were to be locked up, we should see none but old dotards in the streets*."

The only direct answer we find to this, is the following sentence—

"Be assured that he is preparing his own halter; he will soon come to close confinement, and then I shall be served as I desire †."

With regard to Mirabeau, his power of discriminating between justice and injustice, and his hatred of arbitrary acts, had already appeared in his "Essay on Despotism," a work he wrote during his exile at Manosque. But however strong the sway of his fiery nature and towering genius, and however great his despondency, arising from the want of feeling evinced by part of his family, and the desertion of him by the remainder, including his young wife, of whose want of affection and her abandonment of him we shall have occasion to speak hereafter, Mirabeau well knew how to guard against himself. He resolved to pursue that silent obedience, that respectful resignation, of which we are bound to multiply the proofs

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated the 23rd of May 1775.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 23rd 1775.

(certainly very unexpected) on coming to that period of our narrative when the events occurred which deprived him for ever of peace, happiness, and the fair fame of private life; events which would not have taken place had some indulgence been shown to his repentance and submission.

Not daring to express his contrition to his father, who, according to custom, had ordered that he should hold no correspondence with him, he wrote to his uncle in the following terms—

“ If I knew one who had a better heart than yourself, who was more affectionate towards his family, and possessed stronger and sounder judgment, I would apply to that privileged being, and entreat him to ask my father when he intends to put an end to the really deplorable condition in which I have remained for such a length of time. I would say to him—Freedom is a natural right; can I have forfeited it? The same offence ought not to be punished twice. It is certainly not on account of ruinous expenses that I am undergoing so many humiliations, and feel so much remorse, or that, imprisoned in a fortress, I have been deprived of my liberty for more than a year. It is for an affair, perhaps imprudent in form*, but correct in fact, which I shall never disavow, and which would be condemned by no tribunal in the world. On account of

* The quarrel with Baron Villeneuve Moans.

this unfortunate business was I arrested. But must not so protracted an imprisonment persuade the public that I have been guilty of the most grievous faults,—perhaps the most dishonourable actions. What more have I done than I have stated? Let me be informed.

“To whom, my dear uncle, am I to address this language? Am I to abandon the hope of seeing my inconsiderate conduct forgotten?—of transmitting to my son a name that shall not have lost, through my errors, the respect it has derived from yourself and my father? Must I for ever renounce the career in which my own conduct and exertions, with the assistance of your advice, might give me the means of being one day useful and influential in my turn? Times are regenerating, and ambition is now allowable. Permit me to ask you if you believe that the emulation which fires me can be absolutely sterile, and that your nephew, in his seven-and-twentieth year, is incapable of any good? No, my kind uncle, you do not believe it. Raise me up, then; condescend to raise me up. Save me from the effects of the dreadful ferment I am now in, which might destroy in me the fruit of my reflections and of the trials my misfortunes have made me undergo. Believe me, there are men who require to be occupied, and I am one. That constitutional activity which can achieve everything, and without which nothing can be done, becomes turbulent, and ultimately dangerous,

when it has no object to act upon, and is suffered to remain unemployed.

“ Whatever my father’s intentions may be—whether he desires to assist or to crush my ambition, do, at least, entreat him to restore me to liberty. He surely cannot be desirous of driving me to frenzy or madness. I feel my health giving way; my heated brain throbs more violently through the very efforts I make to calm it. In the course of a single month the accumulated snow will have buried me in a country destitute of all moral resources. This is a cruel prospect. My situation is painful and distressing; it will exceed my strength; and you will then regret, but too late, a nephew, now only desirous of living for your satisfaction, and for the interests of his family, his name, and his country *.”

This appeal was undoubtedly deserving of a reply, but the Bailli, the slave of his brother, would not have dared to write one.

“ What do you wish me to do with it? It is for you to know how to act, and what to think; for my part, I will not reply, unless you approve of my doing so, and tell me what I am to say †.”

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his uncle, the Bailli, dated August 22nd 1775, from the Fortress of Joux.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated August 30th 1775.

An answer was sent, but it was neither the uncle who wrote it, nor the nephew who received it.

“ I have informed the Count of Saint-Mauris, in the best manner I could, of every thing by my notes and letters. The plan which this fellow, whose apish tricks you are aware of, has now adopted, is, after having ascertained the mild temper of his commandant, to sham illness, and pretend that his brain is on fire by his detention. As, in several successive letters, I had informed the worthy man of all the circumstances of his prisoner’s fortune, I contented myself, this time, with saying, that with regard to his illness, we no longer believed in it, and that, besides, we were not physicians; that with respect to his liberation, if the king were to release him, his creditors would soon detain him in a much less commodious manner; that when I saved him by means of letters of exile, it looked like a punishment; that from the little I have hastily read in his letter which you sent me, it would now only be tying the hands of justice, a thing which I will not ask, and cannot obtain *.”

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 7th 1775. The Bailli afterwards reproached himself for his timid reserve; and we find that he wrote to his brother as follows:—

“ You must now see that you were wrong in taking him away from the Castle of If, where you ought merely to have had him confined more closely, and got M. Dallègre well reprimanded.”—
Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated January 22nd 1779.

Thus, the complaints of the prisoner were not even read ; and, accustomed as we are to find in the papers from which we collect our history, a monotonous repetition of the same prejudices, the same projects or acts of rigour, we should nevertheless feel surprised at such persevering cruelty, did not a letter, written at that period, reveal to us the new motive for treating Mirabeau with increased severity. His mother, at this time, followed up with great activity the action she had commenced as early as the year 1772, and judicially demanded her liberty, which, during ten years, had been circumscribed, together with the enjoyment of part of her own fortune. The Marquis, who concealed nothing from his brother, wrote to him thus :—

“ This wicked and malicious woman has succeeded in forwarding a letter to her son, although he is under accusation, both royal and civil. But what is to be done? It is impossible to unmarry oneself, or to become again childless.

“ If one of them was at the Salpêtrière, and the other at the foot of the scaffold, they would not be unchristened for all that. You see I am interested in continuing the confinement of the rascal, lest he should come and support his mother *.”

* Unpublished letters of the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 3rd and 10th 1776. This odious calculation that entered the conscience of the Marquis, was founded upon a suppo-

This act, the result of the most heartless selfishness, necessarily led to irreparable consequences for Mirabeau. These consequences were of such a nature, that we have not been able to defend ourselves against a painful hesitation, when about to give an account of them.

In fact, whatever may have been, up to the present period of our narrative, the vicissitudes of his eventful life, we have shown that all these family persecutions, these banishments and imprisonments, never had any other cause than some of the youthful follies which generally remain concealed in the secret of private life, such as debts, duels, and a few love passages.

This disparity between the faults and the punishment has certainly afforded a useful resource to the biographer, whose intention, openly avowed, because it is honest and sacred, is to show, by Mirabeau's private life, how much a character, continually unappreciated, and always thwarted, must be replete with native goodness, to have withstood with such constancy the harshest and most unjust treatment. And we may ask, must not Mirabeau, with his energy of character, have

sition which, though very natural, was not correct. We find by letters, in other respects worthy of oblivion, from the Marchioness of Mirabeau, that she reproached her son with bitterness, and even with violence, for the attempts he made to bring about a reconciliation.

been at the same time a man of the best feelings, not to have become the most vicious and wicked * ?

We now come to events of a far different nature. Hitherto Mirabeau had transgressed only against family discipline, but had wronged nobody except imprudent and covetous creditors. His only business with the magistrates had been the consequence of some obscure quarrels. We now find him committing a truly culpable act, outraging public morals by the scandal of his conduct, endangering the peace of three highly respectable families, plunging an impassioned female, hitherto innocent and virtuous, if not happy, into a career of error, which ended in dishonour and suicide, though in the latter, it is true, she was urged on by another fatal passion. In a word, we shall see Mirabeau "ruin himself," as, two years later, the author of his ruin expressed it, in the extraordinary sentence we here transcribe :—

"I do not reproach myself with any thing, I assure you, in his removal from the castle of If to that of Joux†. How can I feel regret at having made him pursue his career? My purse feels it; that alone suffers but

* Mirabeau renders the same testimony to his own character. "Few men perhaps have made more efforts to conquer their own disposition than I have, who am full of faults, but might have even more, considering the barbarous and mistaken conduct of my father."

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated October 19th 1777.

reproaches not *. Had he remained at the castle of If, with his testimonials obtained from that fool Dallègre, he would still be there, complaining of injustice, and would not have been able to run to ruin, as he has done, which circumstance has proved the salvation of his family †."

Would to heaven that, in the existence of these facts, the biographer were allowed to remain silent, not only on account of the person whose life he writes, but also to avoid awakening painful recollections, and adding to so many events injurious to morality without serving its interests, an episode, which, instead of remaining buried among a great number of anecdotes that excite only a momentary curiosity, is written in the page of history on account of the notoriety acquired by the individual principally concerned in this unfortunate business.

But this cannot be allowed. The biographer cannot pass in silence over facts which have been revealed by the publication of a number of judicial statements, and above all by the immense publicity given to the Letters written from the Donjon of Vincennes; a publicity caused by Manuel, the Procurator of the Commune, who basely speculated upon the originals deposited in the police office, and in his haste to enjoy

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated October 12th 1777.

† Unpublished letter, already quoted, from the same to the same, dated October 19th 1777.

the fruits of a bad action, did not give himself the trouble to strike out a number of scandalous and useless details. He added, on the contrary, numerous interpolations, as we shall shortly prove, and thus left Mirabeau's friends divided between the inconsolable grief of an exposure tarnishing his memory, and the satisfaction of seeing a publication in which the goodness of his heart and the firmness of his principles are not less conspicuous, than the astonishing variety of his acquirements, the rich fluency of his style, and the vigour of his genius.

That which the biographer must reveal, he will do without reserve. It is then with the greatest candour, though with the most profound regret, that we state all that has come to our knowledge respecting Mirabeau's passion for the ardent and unfortunate Sophie. Anxious however to circumscribe, as much as possible, an account of so delicate a nature, we shall not follow the example of a certain writer, who has taken pleasure in swelling out the account to three hundred pages, copied from printed books *. We give the exact, but the concise truth, supported by evidence ; and we admit as such only original, authentic, and contradictory documents, in which the persons introduced, describe themselves.

* Peuchet, *Memoirs sur Mirabeau et son Erotique*. Paris, 1824, 4 vols. 8vo.

BOOK V.

ON the 25th of May 1775, Mirabeau arrived at the castle of Joux, "that owl's nest enlivened by a few invalids* ; that residence, the old walls of which are covered with snow †, and which is even in the finest weather frequently enveloped in clouds broken on the points of the rocks that surround it ‡."

Mirabeau was at first melancholy, and confined himself to his turret ; nor did he ever receive any one there, because visitors, disliking the fatigue of a steep road, and the wild and gloomy place to which it led,

* Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 354 ; and second case in appeal from the judgment, by default, passed by the bailiwick of Pontarlier, 1782, 8vo, p. 45.

† " You know that I met with snow there on the 25th of May." — *Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes*, vol. i. p. 362.

‡ Picturesque and Romantic Travels through Ancient France, by MM. Charles Nodier, J. Taylor, and A. Cailleux ; Franche-Comté, p. 168. We notice, by the way, that the editors, forgetting Vincennes, say, in their account of the Castle of Joux, p. 170, that " Mirabeau there wrote his letters to Sophie." It is with the same want of reflection that Mirabeau's private life has almost constantly been described even by the most enlightened writers.

“came half way from Portarlier,” and Mirabeau “mostly received them in the country*.”

The coronation of Louis XVI, solemnised on the 11th of June 1775, led to general festivities. The small town of Pontarlier had theirs. The Count of St. Mauris, the governor, “made himself conspicuous in them,” and was anxious “that Mirabeau should witness his glory†.” He even wished that the Count might become their historian, for he enjoined him to draw up a statement of the festivities that had there taken place in honour of the coronation. Besides the draught, which is in his own hand-writing, we most likely possess the only copy of that pamphlet (Geneva, 1776) containing fourteen pages in 12mo. With the exception of the first pages, which we shall insert elsewhere, we must confess that this official statement is somewhat insipid, and remarkable neither for the light vivacity and fancy which Mirabeau afterwards evinced, nor the pungent vigour he had recently displayed in his “Treatise on Despotism‡.”

* Case in appeal, already quoted, same page.

† Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 365.

‡ Mirabeau has twice referred to this pamphlet in writings which have been published only since his death. See “Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes,” vol. ii. p. 330; and the unpublished letters, published by Vitry, 1806, Lenormand, p. 146. This last extract is taken from the second paper by Mirabeau, on his prosecution at Pontarlier, in appeal from the judgment against him by default, dated March 10th 1777.

As Mirabeau enjoyed a sort of half freedom *, and had been induced to come to Pontarlier, he was of course introduced "to the only family with whom he could form an intimacy †," that of the Marquis of Monnier ‡, the chief, if not the only inhabitant of any note in that small town. The Marquis, who bid him heartily welcome, "liked to hear him relate his misfortunes, would even listen to his faults," and "administered both consolation and advice §."

Claude Francis, Marquis of Monnier, Lord of Courvière, Mamerole, and other places, had been First President of the Chamber of Accounts at Dôle. He had attained a great age, and was a widower. Being exasperated with his only daughter for having married a M. de Valdahou || against his consent, through com-

* "Your father told me that he had not given any orders to deprive you of your liberty, except that he charged the commandant to be answerable for you until further orders."—See p. 29 of the *Observations on behalf of the Count of Mirabeau*, and the Countess's letter, from which this extract is taken.

† Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 156.

‡ He retired to Pontarlier after the suppression of the Court of Accounts of Dôle.

§ First case in appeal, already quoted, p. iv.

|| If any reliance is to be placed in the *Gazettier Cuirassié* (1772, p. 68), the judgment obliged the Marquis of Monnier to pay 60,000 francs as his daughter's dower. According to Bachaumont, vol. ii. p. 175, M. de Valdahou had, on the score of seduction, been condemned, in 1764, by the tribunal of first instance, by default, to a twenty years' exile and to the payment of 20,000 francs damages and costs. The Marquis of Monnier entered an appeal *à minima*

pulsion of the law, he, with a view of being revenged on her, married, on the 1st of July 1771, Maria Thérèse Richard of Ruffey, daughter of a president of the Chamber of Accounts in Burgundy *. This lady was then little more than eighteen years of age †.

This ill-assorted union could not ensure a young woman's happiness, to which she was however the more entitled, as she had been a stranger to it in the bosom of her austere family, who, to promote the interests of the male children, had made their eldest daughter enter a cloister, and wanted to marry the younger to the illustrious Buffon, then sixty-three years of age ‡. They

from this sentence, which, notwithstanding his endeavours, was, however, set aside.

* Gilles Germain Richard de Ruffey. See the notice of his works, poetical, on Natural History, Archæology, and Political Economy, pp. 161—164, of a collection of unpublished letters addressed by sundry illustrious individuals to the Academy of Dijon. Paris, Dijon, 1819, 12mo.

† The marriage took place at Tronchant, near Saint-Jean de Losne, where the family of Ruffey had estates.

‡ Unpublished Dialogues, written by Mirabeau in the Donjon of Vincennes.

“When I was about sixteen years of age (it is Sophie who speaks), they wanted to make me marry Buffon. This project failed, and I soon got reconciled to it, because he wrote that in love there was nothing good for anything but the physical, and the sentiment by which it was accompanied was worthless. Losing the hope of marrying him, I lost my taste for old men.” Buffon had kept up some scientific and literary relations with M. de Ruffey, as appears from several letters inserted in the collection just now referred to.

and ultimately gave her up to the Marquis of Monnier, who was still older.

“ You tell us,” said her mother *, in a letter to her, “ that you have never been happy : what prevented you from being so in infancy ? Did I not endeavour to anticipate your wishes during the two years you spent with me prior to your marriage ? Was ever daughter more cherished and beloved ? ”

“ Mother,” replied Sophie, “ your recapitulation of my happiness is not altogether correct. It contains some truths, it is true ; but what are the joys of a child

* Unpublished letter from Madame de Ruffey to her daughter, dated March 25th 1779. The numerous letters in our possession written by Madame de Ruffey (Anne Claude de la Foret) prove that she was sensible, witty, virtuous, and so kind a mother that the absurd marriage must be supposed either an error in judgment as regards herself, or an act of conjugal obedience. As Madame de Ruffey was very strict and religious, she must have suffered cruelly from her daughter's errors, and the more so because her enlightened mind must easily have conceived that the origin of those errors was her unfortunate marriage, and the consequent wrongs she had suffered from her family. Madame de Ruffey may have been mistaken concerning the measures taken to arrest the progress of the evil, prevent scandal, and even inflict punishment ; but she has not been spoken of as she deserves. If excitement under passion may, we do not say excuse, for that is impossible, but explain the abuse which Mirabeau heaps upon her in his correspondence from Vincennes, nothing, on the other hand, can justify the churlish editor, Manuel, for allowing it to remain, nor the biographer Peuchet for abusing, in his turn, the virtuous and unfortunate mother of Sophie. Vol. i. p. 414.

eight years of age, who is pleased with a few sugar plums and caresses? All I valued of happiness was absorbed by the fear I entertained of having a husband whom I could not love. How is it possible, then, that I have been happy? You were not alone at home. Was I not under perpetual restraint, enjoying nothing, and in constant dread of my father? You tell me that I was very well contented during the first eighteen months of my marriage, and that 'I had expressed as much both to yourself and to my friends in whom I placed still greater confidence.' It is true that I had been longing for a change; and that, being once married, I wished to attach myself to what I called my duties, and persuade myself that I was happy by inducing other people to think me so: but the more I persevered, the heavier became the burthen. The year I remained a solitary slave with the Marquis, and which you term my happiness of eighteen months, was sad, wearisome, and dull. I was without a farthing; I was constantly found fault with for matters concerning the household; I was allowed neither to pay nor to receive visits; the whole of my life was spent in playing at whist, being always the partner of the Marquis. Now, though I lived in retirement, and was not allowed to dance, and hardly to speak to any body, people already talked about me, and the Marquis became more and more fidgetty and jealous, without knowing why*."

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to her mother, dated July 18th 1777.

The habitual presence of a man, who, though not remarkable for a graceful figure, had all the attractions of youth, talent, and misfortune, could not fail to become dangerous to a young woman in whom the passions had hitherto slumbered, when the state of her family, the age and monkish devotions of the husband, and her constant restraint and ennui are taken into consideration. Sophie's candour and feelings left her also without defence, and betrayed her, unknown to herself, into a passion which daily increased.

Though Mirabeau had more experience, he was not less in danger.

“ I was most unhappy, and unhappiness increases sensibility. She evinced a liking for me, and displayed charms that always powerfully attract me, namely those of a generous mind and amiable temper. I was looking for some one to console me, and what can do it so sweetly as love? Till then I had only known the intercourse of gallantry, which is but a mere deception in love. Oh! how cold was that feeling compared to the one with which her presence began to inspire me! I possess the qualities and defects of my constitution: if this renders me hasty, and even impetuous, it also kindles a fire in my heart that nourishes unutterable tenderness*, and makes me burn with that sensibility, at once precious and fatal, which is the source

* Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 357.

of beautiful conceptions, deep impressions, great talents, great success, and, but too often, of great faults and much misery *. I was no longer hurried away by the strong call of nature founded on the delights of the senses; I was not even excited by a wish to please a judge of exquisite taste: my feelings were too much engaged to harbour self-love. I paid but little attention to propriety, to uniformity of taste, to my want of an intimate companion, of a woman in whom I might confide, and over whom we have more control than she has over us. More powerful attractions had shaken my heart: I found a woman who, far different from myself, has all the virtues of her constitution, and none of its defects. She is gentle, but neither indifferent nor careless, as most gentle natures are. She is tender-hearted, but not pliant; benevolent, but her benevolence excludes neither discernment nor firmness. Alas! all her good qualities are her own, all her defects mine. I met with this adorable woman, who was formed for love; I studied her under all circumstances, and too profoundly, for this sweet contemplation kept me too long. I knew her very soul, formed by nature in a moment of magnificence; and she concentrated the scattered rays of my ardent sensibility †."

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated April 19th 1779.

† Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. i. pp. 357—359; and vol. ii. pp. 75, 76.

“Notwithstanding Sophie’s perfections, her graces, her beautiful complexion, her sweet and voluptuous countenance, her flashes of wit, at once so happy and so natural, which come like lightning, and strike the more as they are least expected, her conversation that penetrated the soul*,” Mirabeau resisted the excitement of his heart and senses. “When I reflected, I was troubled; for I was dreadfully afraid of love†. If to have been unable to resist so powerful a seduction be a crime, it was not an intentional one. I at first beheld with dread the internal trouble which agitated her bosom; and I strove to resist the temptation‡.”

This assertion, inserted in a justification addressed to the Marquis of Mirabeau, through the kind offices of some persons in authority, might for that very reason be called in question; but we are able to corroborate it with unexceptionable evidence. The same is to be found in a copy of the “Dialogues,” which Mirabeau so often mentions, in his letters from the Donjon of Vincennes§, and which he had written for the pleasure of recalling to his mind and to that of Sophie the commencement of their intimacy, the tranquillity and freedom of which were of such short duration. It is true,

* Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. i. pp. 357, 358. 469; and vol. ii. pp. 75, 76.

† The same, vol. i. p. 123.

‡ The same, vol. i. p. 359.

§ The same, vol. i. pp. 44, 110, 116; vol. ii. p. 106; vol. iii. pp. 514, 231, 248; vol. iv. p. 434.

he was seen at her house from the commencement of June, 1775; but he soon withdrew into voluntary exile. She upbraids him, in the 'Dialogues,' for having avoided society "for several months," though the Marquis of Monnier had repeatedly urged him to come to his house. She attributes this resistance to an attachment for a certain young Belinda, a coquette, in rather humble circumstances. Mirabeau acknowledges it, by confessing that he used those means to dispel and to conquer a more serious attachment, and that his attentions to Belinda did not affect his heart, being merely a freak of the imagination. He adds: "I endeavoured to form for myself a shield of duty. I even mentioned my wife. I felt that this restraint became necessary, as my respect for public opinion might prove some check to me*. I wrote a very strong letter to my wife; it was most pressing, and was full of the eloquence with which the subject inspired me at the time, to prevail upon her to share my fate, as prescribed by all laws, divine and human. I received a few cold lines in reply, in which she gently insinuated that I had lost my senses. * * * * * You refused me her who bore my name, and I yielded to love, whose philtres had intoxicated me. I yielded to my sensibility because I was unable to escape from it†."

* Justification, dated March 1st 1778, in the Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 359.

† Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 367; and vol. iii. p. 391.

This step surely proves that Mirabeau was in earnest, and wished to subdue "that heart of his, so gentle and so good, but too easily inflamed*." He would have been saved had his motives been understood; though this does not justify his subsequent aberrations. But whilst we condemn Mirabeau, we must also pity him.

A biographer of the name of Peuchet, and we are quite at a loss to guess why and upon what grounds, expresses some doubt respecting the truth of this account which Mirabeau gave of his repeated endeavours to guard himself against an attachment the impetuosity of which he foresaw. This writer, in accordance with his custom of never proving any thing, opposes mere conjecture to a fact, which, on account of its being a palliation if not a justification of Mirabeau's fault, ought to have been admitted by a conscientious biographer; especially as it could not be fairly rejected, except on conclusive evidence.

We do not assert any thing without such evidence, and we are about to prove peremptorily, that the foolish act (we shall soon have a right to call it heroic) that embittered the remainder of Mirabeau's life, and sullies, in some degree, his memory, should not be imputed to his precipitation and rashness, but to the pusillanimous selfishness of his wife, the cruelty of his father, the indifference of the public authorities, and the

* Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 162.

blind self-denial which was from that time imposed upon this unhappy man.

We shall prove by and by what measures he took with his superiors. We shall transcribe a letter, never published, which he wrote to the minister to obtain a military appointment, in order to withdraw himself from the sway of an attachment that might still be subdued, and withdraw in time from the presence of a lady to whom he was not yet obliged to devote himself at all risks, as the moment had not yet arrived when she lost all regard for her reputation, station, rank, fortune, peace of mind, and happiness, and forced Mirabeau to accept the sacrifice of all. For the present, we merely lay some stress on his vain applications to his family. We are sorry that we cannot insert the letter in which, in despair, he supplicates the Countess of Mirabeau. But we affirm that Madame du Saillant had a perfect recollection of it; that her endeavours were useless at the time to prevail upon her sister-in-law to accede to a reconciliation, that had become so necessary; and that she could not even obtain a sight of the letter, as is proved by what Mirabeau wrote to her five years later.

“ The Countess of Mirabeau has not felt inclined to show you, and is not unlikely to withhold the letter which I wrote to her from Pontarlier, previously to my flight, and before I was intoxicated with all the philtres of love. I really do not know what is meant by ‘ a threatening note.’ It was a letter of eight pages, and

cannot therefore be styled a note. If at my death I am summoned to appear before the sublime Spirit which presides over nature, this will be my answer: ‘I am covered with dreadful stains, and thou, great God, alone knowest whether I should have been as guilty as I am, if that letter had been properly answered*!’”

We find the point in dispute doubly confirmed by the following passages in two letters:—

“Besides, your son earnestly demanded his wife; she was not disposed to join him; and this palliates his wrongs towards her†.”

“When morality existed, a wife, who had a full sense of her duty, would have agreed to become his fellow-prisoner to the end; and she ought to have done so. I am not quite sure whether this young woman, so much in danger for the future, would not have pursued the wiser course by making him her own, by some striking favour, so as entirely to confound him if he ventured to complain‡.”

If the fact had not been true, Mirabeau would never have been so incautious as to mention it afterwards

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated October 25th 1780. See likewise the correspondence from Vincennes, vol. iii. p. 356. We give a fac simile of this fragment.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 30th 1782.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 20th 1779.

in his energetic defence, made before the Parliament of Provence*, during the proceedings that took place there; for had the adverse parties been able, they would not in their animosity have failed to give him one of those denials that kept pace with their insults and calumnies.

The fatal intimacy between Mirabeau and Sophie soon increased; chance brought it to a sudden denouement.

Sophie had long since contracted a friendship with a young lady, mentioned in the correspondence from the Donjon of Vincennes, under the names of Julie Saint B., and Saint Belin†. This lady had inspired a gentleman of her own country with a deep attachment‡. A certain conformity of situation, and a want of mutual confidence and assistance, brought Sophie and Julie into close intimacy. They rendered each other every service, and by each other's assistance they corresponded with their lovers. But a misunderstanding soon arose between them; for, either from jealousy in friendship, or from vexation at not

* See especially p. 35 of the "Observations by the Count of Mirabeau on a certain Part of his Law-suit." Aix, A. Adibert, 1783.

† Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. pp. 29, 30, 37, 64: vol. ii. p. 241. Madame de Saint Belin was a Canoness of Salles, at Viteaux, in Burgundy.

‡ M. de Grandchamps, lieutenant of cavalry in the regiment of Auxonne.

having been successful in some attempts at coquetry, Julie tried to promote a quarrel between Sophie and Mirabeau. Sophie, on something being said against Mirabeau, warmly took his part; and this occasioned a direct breach between the ladies. We cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of giving the Marchioness of Monnier's explanation of it, as it makes her generous confidence and tender devotedness appear in an interesting light.

“ My conduct, Sir, must needs have appeared strange to you, but I appreciate the esteem with which you have favoured me, and which, being anxious to retain it, I am willing to justify. You are aware that no woman can well love another more than I loved Julie; but one inclination does not destroy another. Through some gossip's story, which I am at a loss to comprehend, Madame de Saint Belin wrote me a letter full of invectives against Gabriel; she even assured me that she despised him. Now, Sir, whoever despises Gabriel must despise Sophie, as she loves him. I replied, therefore, that my lover and I required the approbation of no other person but ourselves; and that I should take no notice of what she was pleased to style ‘his atrocities.’ Upon this, she wrote to me again, and told me things which even the animosity of an enemy would not have invented. She nevertheless knew my heart and my love for Gabriel; or, let me rather say, she knew

not my love. Even he who inspires it knows it but partially. I felt even more indignant at the second letter than I had been at the first. I sent her back her portrait, on which I had set great value, informing her at the same time that I should write to her no more. Do not therefore attempt to reconcile us, it will be of no use: fail not to tell her so, and that I am bound to avenge Gabriel*.”

We may infer from the date of this letter, and from the high state of excitement it betrays, that this determination to “avenge Gabriel” contributed to bring about the event which, in ten days from the date of this letter, namely, on the 13th of December 1775, put an end to Sophie’s hesitation and resistance, to which Mirabeau so frequently alludes after he had stated the fact in a separate note†.

The Marquis of Monnier, with his experience, was sixty-five, and in love notwithstanding his years, could not but have taken notice of Mirabeau’s attentions, and must have had some presentiment of what it would naturally lead to. We shall repeat the numerous conjectures made in the correspondence from Vincennes respecting the cause of his long silence, which is supposed to be disgraceful and even odious; but it is certain, that he never now of his

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to M. de Grandchamps, dated December 3rd 1775.

† Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. iv. p. 351.

own accord showed any symptoms of jealousy, which, as we have already stated, he had previously evinced without cause. Be this, however, as it may, his confidence, whether real or assumed, was soon put to the test by the warnings and reports that reached him from all quarters.

Mirabeau principally accuses the Count of Saint-Mauris, whom he taxes with having entertained personal pretensions with regard to Sophie, which had been coldly repressed.

“ I was at least forty or forty-five years younger than Saint-Mauris, and if I was nearly as ugly as himself, I was a more reputable man *. He soon discovered the good understanding that existed between Madame de Monnier and myself. His dark looks proclaimed his resentment, and it soon found vent in epigrams. He wanted to excite against Madame de Monnier the rumours of the town, also the officiousness of the priests and other authors of anonymous letters †.”

We shall soon show the hatred of those enemies supported by other persecutors in whom Sophie should have found natural protectors. The Count of Saint-Mauris was however not satisfied : ever since the end of December he had resolved to put Mirabeau under closer confinement. He found two pretences for this severity : the announcement that a bale had arrived

* Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 356.

† Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 361.

containing copies of Mirabeau's "Treatise on Despotism," published at Neufchatel, and the discovery of a promissory note, signed by Mirabeau, whose income, through his father's covetousness, had been reduced to a pension of 1200 francs a year, and who had been compelled to borrow that he might exchange his light clothes of Provence for others more suited to the temperature of the castle of Joux, and for other expenses.

"He (Saint-Mauris) knew very well that I could not live here upon a hundred francs a month, as I was travelling and hunting through the country to get materials for works which he had himself asked me for; and I was often obliged to buy books*."

This second pretence for persecution, so terrible in its consequences, might easily have been foregone by the Count of Saint Mauris, but for the fatality which drew the lovers into perdition.

"The other day I was perusing your statement†, and I perceived that the debt which was the beginning of our misfortunes at Pontarlier might have been easily paid. You had only to return the bills to Fauche‡; I would then have paid the surplus and your other

* Letter from Mirabeau to his father, dated January 18th 1776, inserted in the Second Brief and Counsel's Opinion on the Appeal from the Judgment at Pontarlier, Justificative Documents, p. 4.

† The paper dated March 1st 1778, to which we have many times alluded.

‡ Bookseller at Neufchatel.

debts; it would have been a mere trifle. I cannot forgive myself for not having thought of it at the time; but it so happened, because you cannot bring your mind to make the least request, not even to me, and because I likewise carry this folly so far as to feel as much ashamed when I offer as when I ask. I am afraid to ask favours, and dare not even pay people when the sums are but small, or when the individuals happen to be well dressed or are known to me *."

We give this extract merely because it may have appeared twenty times in print that the abduction of the Marchioness of Monnier had led to "immense spoliation," an assertion both false and monstrous, and to which we shall again recur at the proper time.

The two pretences of which the Count of Saint Mauris took advantage were really insignificant. With regard to the "Treatise on Despotism," the order, or the caution of Albert, the lieutenant-general of police, did not allow him even to mention Mirabeau †.

The bill, on the other hand, which, it must be acknowledged, was irregularly signed under the restraint of a *Lettre de Cachet*, was not yet due, and Mirabeau

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated June 20th 1780.

† Unpublished letter from the Marchioness of Mirabeau to her son, and to M. Michaud, Procureur du Roi at Pontarlier, dated December 17th 1776.

had ample means of paying it with the amount he was about to receive for a work he had already completed.

Notwithstanding all this, Saint-Mauris ordered him to return to the fortress of Joux *.

“ I will obey,” answered Mirabeau, “ though my father, see here his letter, relied on your complaisance for permission to remain at Pontarlier, which he had not been able to obtain from the minister †.”

The commandant did not relent; he wrote in violent terms ‡ to the Marquis of Mirabeau, as inexorable as himself, whose reply soon authorised fresh severity.

Mirabeau, now become desperate, had recourse to flight §, and foreseeing his fate, took leave of Saint-Mauris, on the 16th of January 1776, in the following terms —

“ I fly from an authority which has become tyrannical, and has laid me more snares than I could ever

* Letter from Mirabeau to M. de Saint-Mauris, dated December 30th 1776. See same Justificative Documents, p. 6.

† The same letter from Mirabeau to M. de Saint-Mauris, dated December 30th 1776. See the same Justificative Documents, p. 7.

‡ Unpublished letter from Michaud to the Marchioness of Mirabeau, dated December 24th 1776. See also Second Justificative Document, p. 7.

§ We find in the First Brief on behalf of the Count of Mirabeau against the Marquis of Monnier, p. 3 of the 12mo edition, a circumstance mentioned nowhere else.

“ I made my escape at the close of a ball given on my account; for the Marquis of Monnier wished that his wife should pay me this compliment, in consequence of my being king on Twelfth Night.”

This fact is also mentioned in the Second Brief, p. 118.

have to fear from an honourable man. You may perhaps feel some remorse, when you reflect that you have done all in your power to ruin a young man of whom some hopes were entertained, and to whom you cannot impute any thing dishonourable;—for what business had you to care for a bill, which I did not owe till it became due? Have you any other subject of complaint? If so, state it; if not, you must admit that it was perfidious to set my father against me, so as to render all reconciliation hopeless, and to request my removal, at the very time you were shaking me by the hand and embracing me. If my stay in this part of the country hurts your vanity, if to me you impute the disdain of a respectable woman whom you have cruelly reviled, because you have not been able to seduce her, did it become you to yield to such motives, when you might have saved a gentleman, a man, and an unhappy fellow-creature? You might have got rid of me in an honourable manner by reconciling me to my father; and this was your duty. You can never repair the injury you have done me; but you may prevent its increase by abstaining from writing falsehoods to the minister. Do your worst. In your innermost soul you are as much disturbed as irritated at my frankness; but I pay very dearly for the power of writing to you thus *.”

* Second Brief for Counsel's Opinion on the Appeal from the Sentence at Pontarlier, p. 42, and Justificative Documents, p. 1.

This direct reproach, this letter written to the Count of Saint-Mauris himself, a copy of which was also sent to the Marquis of Monnier *, gives a certainty to the base cause of the rival commandant's persecutions, which could not have proceeded from the mere justification addressed by Mirabeau to his father, two years subsequently, during Saint-Mauris's absence, and without his knowledge †. From this time, another copy, giving to the Marquis of Mirabeau those explanations which extenuated his son's errors, should have warned him of the exaggeration of malignant reports, and the danger of over-strained severity. Putting kindness out of the question, if he had but behaved towards his son as he did towards every other person, that is to say, with prudence and justice, he would by mild measures and a prompt change of scene, have saved Mirabeau from the consequences of a fault which soon became irreparable, and to the commission of which he was driven as much by circumstances as by the violence of his own passions.

After such a declaration addressed to Saint-Mauris who was "both an intractable man and an irritated

* Second Brief for Counsel's Opinion on the Appeal from the Sentence at Pontarlier. See the end of the Justificative Documents, p. 1.

† Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol i. p. 355, 361, 364.

rival *," Mirabeau could not return to the fortress of Joux. He wrote to his mother as follows :—

"I am informed by some friends at Pontarlier, that my father, who had apprised M. de Saint-Mauris of my return to the castle of Joux, begged the latter to put me 'in a healthy and dry place of confinement, but securely bolted and barred †, and to take particular care that I did not write to, or hold communication with any one.' In compliance with my father's wish, M. de Saint-Mauris prepared for me the tower of Grammont, a dungeon famous for its hideous appearance and its dreadful inconvenience ‡. Gracious heaven! is it possible that any one can have thought of replacing me under the custody of that vile Saint-Mauris, who is so evidently and obstinately bent upon my ruin; who called his God to witness that he would never take any steps which might injure me with the minister. He is a monster who looks upon me with the eyes of a vulture, eager to feed upon a corpse §!"

These expressions are no doubt strong; but to give a more correct notion of the indignation with which Saint-Mauris's tyranny inspired Mirabeau, we insert

* Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 366.

† See relative to the same fact, p. 383 of the same volume.

‡ Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated March 31st 1776.

§ Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated February 26th 1776.

a letter which two months subsequently the latter addressed to the minister *.

“As you have not considered me entitled to the least indulgence, I now merely call upon you for that impulse of common humanity which induces a man to fly to the aid of a drowning fellow-creature. I learn from Paris that I am to return to Joux under the charge of M. de Saint-Mauris. I beg as a favour then that you would order me to be put in irons. You will, by so doing, rescue me from the greatest of misfortunes, and spare a man whom I shall never be able to look upon as the representative of my sovereign ; for in my sight he is the most vile and abject of human beings. I should destroy myself, Sir, and involve him in my ruin, were I to continue to have the free use of my hands. Irons will not disgrace me. I am myself the first judge of my own case, and the only one I cannot challenge: more than one citizen, and more than one family are interested in my not returning to the place which you designate as my prison ! Pray consider that he who makes avowals to the king’s minister such as I have now the honour of addressing to you, is a man who fears nothing but his own conscience †.”

Will any one, after the perusal of this terrible declaration, be surprised that Mirabeau had already, on

* The immortal Malesherbes.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Malesherbes, dated May 4th 1776.

the 16th of January, escaped from the fortress of Joux? His first excitement drove him to Switzerland *, but reflection, and, we must own, passion soon brought him back to Pontarlier. He afterwards boldly avowed this second motive.

“ I resolved to conceal myself at Pontarlier, and remain near the Marchioness of Monnier. I resigned myself to the most dismal, and at the same time the most dangerous existence, that I might not quit my friend. If I had not loved her, who could have detained me? Eighteen months of imprisonment had exhausted my patience. I was on the frontier, sure of finding in foreign countries, provided I went alone, those advantages which my youth, my birth, and my sword might have won for me. For what I cared, the thunder might have pealed at a distance, I should not have been afraid of its reaching me, and I would not have returned to my country, until I had acquired a right to believe that I had atoned for my faults. All this was clear to me, but to no purpose was I aware of it. Common sense, that discernment which guides a man's reason, is but a poor security for the prudence of his conduct. Understanding makes things clear to the mind; but prevailing passion associates itself with understanding

* First Brief for Counsel's Opinion on the Case of the Count of Mirabeau against the Marquis of Monnier, p. 4, of the 8vo edition, Second Brief, p. 49.

to make us act, and the latter is always stronger than its companion. I therefore remained, but my stay was altogether a sacrifice to affection; and, I repeat it, such faults have a strong claim upon the indulgence and commiseration of persons endowed with feeling *."

In another place he says :—

"Alas! I fully comprehend all the logic of the morality which you preach to me so much at your ease, in the absence of the passion that devoured me, but which you have not felt, and therefore do not understand! Bear, however, in mind, that my happiness had scarcely begun, when some cruel persons tore it from me. Learn to know your brother, if you are able; and then ask yourself, whether, whilst I was under the infatuation of a first love, a fortnight's possession clandestinely obtained and attended with many crosses, could satiate my heart and my senses, both alike insatiable †!"

Notwithstanding the strength of this infatuation, Mirabeau was still in some measure able to resist it, for he made a serious attempt to escape from it. The following letter, which he wrote the day before his escape, to the Count of Saint-Germain ‡, then war minister, is a proof of this.

"Your reputation inspires me with sufficient con-

* Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. i. p. 369, 370.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 15th 1780.

‡ He retired from office in September 1777, and died in 1778.

fidence to place myself under your protection, and your office makes my doing so both a duty and a necessity."

"I have now, for more than eighteen months past, been detained in fortresses, for an affair in which I behaved as became a man of honour. This affair was regularly pending at law *. A ministerial order deprived me of my liberty at a time when such an order was easily obtained. As a subject, a nobleman, and an officer, I belong to my king. I am a Frenchman. My name is Mirabeau, and I am a captain of dragoons."

"I have long taken patience: my heart felt repugnance at contending with a parent, and the reputation of mine alarmed me. Besides, prospects were continually held out to me that my fortune would change.

"It was about to be cruelly aggravated, and I have withdrawn from persecution. A letter is not well calculated to contain the particulars of my grievances, and to insert them would be tiring your patience.

"I am only anxious to clear myself from the imputations by which I may be aspersed. I will avow my faults, though I will prove to you that they have been exaggerated, and that nobody had a right to form a bad opinion of a young man whose honour and good sense have never been disputed, and who has nothing

* The pretence, as our readers are aware, was the affair with Villeneuve Moëns.

to reproach himself with further than having spent more money than was necessary to secure his tranquillity.

“ The Baron of Vioménil, and Viscount Harem-bure knew me in Corsica, where I served under their command. You know better than any other person how much this detached warfare is calculated to show the value of a young officer. Do me the favour to inquire what they think of me.

“ I ask to serve the king, in my rank and under any commander whom you may be pleased to designate. I will blindly abide by the opinion they may give of me. Put me to the proof, and be alone my judge. I make bold to beg of you that my father's name and reputation may again rouse your justice, and not inspire you with prejudice against me.

“ I have not fled to a foreign land, and I shall not leave my country until I am absolutely forced. But permit me to conceal for a time my place of residence, and await your orders, so as not to be exposed to those which my father may obtain against me. May a heart like yours feel that the fate of a citizen whose safety is at stake, is an object well worth attention ; may you, as the king's minister, be pleased to recollect what a man of your own order, who has already obtained some promotion, and may perhaps do good service, has a right to expect from your kindness. Allow me to beg you would have the

goodness to address your commands to my mother, the Marchioness of Mirabeau, at the Dames de la Trinité, Faubourg Saint-Antoine, Paris *."

Having vainly waited for some time, without obtaining any reply, Mirabeau continually addressed useless supplications to his father, who likewise received pressing letters from a clever and prudent man, then performing the duties of Procureur du Roi at Pontarlier †, and very much attached to Mirabeau. The reader may judge of the Marquis's feelings by his reply—

"I have received the letter which you were so good as to write to me under date of the 23rd inst. I cannot but express my thanks for the motive that induced you to take that trouble, and shall reply to it with the candour which it inspires.

"So far as I am able to judge of men and things, if the person in whom you are pleased to take some interest could go to a country where he would not

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to the Count of Saint Germain, dated January 15th 1776.

† Michaud. (See Letters from Vincennes, vol. i. p. 370.) When Mirabeau came forward, in February 1782, to get a sentence by default set aside, this worthy magistrate excused himself from conducting the adverse proceeding, on account of his relationship to the Marquis of Monnier. We shall further show that other magistrates did not entertain the same scruples, especially the Substitut Sombarde, who bore the same degree of relationship. Mirabeau afterwards wrote:—

"He (Michaud) was the more ready to excuse himself as he feels a kind attachment towards me."—*Third Brief for Counsel's Opinion*, &c., p. 8.

stand in his own light, you would do him great wrong to prevent him. I at this moment know of no country to which he is a greater stranger than to France. With a judicial condemnation hanging over his head in his own country, pursued by a host of creditors who have judgments against him, and whom he is unable to pay; refractory to two successive orders from the king, still in force against him (and you are aware of the law of this kingdom respecting the latter point)*, his country, I am sure, affords him but little safety. With

* Namely, orders of exile; and the Marquis, blinded by animosity, forgot what he had himself written concerning similar orders, not only in his works, which we do not quote, as they are published, but also in his "Domestic Memoirs," designed for the instruction of his family, and in several letters addressed to his brother.

We give a fragment from these Memoirs. It relates to the request made by his steward in Provence, in 1756, for *lettres de cachet* to repress some turbulent and mutinous vassals.

"He induced me to ask for *lettres de cachet* for the imprisonment of those two rogues. This I will never do again, and I regret it though my application was unsuccessful. There are regular tribunals for everything. They have undoubtedly their defects; but we are bound to put up with them, and are not at liberty, if Providence has granted us greater means than she has given to others, to use such means in perverting the regular course of justice. I will not do it again; and I recommend to those who come after me, if they have the patience to read this, never to do it, however plausible their private reasons may be, for it is a great abuse, on account of the consequences."—*Unpublished Domestic Memoirs of the Marquis of Mirabeau.*

We likewise give the following extracts from the Marquis's letters to his brother on this subject. When the Marquis, after his temporary

regard to the protestations which you have been so kind as to communicate, allow me to observe, that they would not be disregarded, if I could rely on any protestations proceeding from him, and if I thought them sincere; but time and numberless opportunities have convinced me that his notions and mine must ever disagree. This opposition has been openly and painfully carried on long enough, when you consider that I tried him till he had reached his twenty-seventh year.

detention at Vincennes, had to go into exile for a few weeks, at his estate of Bignon, in the midst of his family, and near Paris, he felt much irritated, and thus expresses himself:—

“According to my principles, an order to leave this or that spot does not place a subject in a state of oppression; but exile to such a spot is a real state of imprisonment, from which a man may escape without being criminal.”—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 11th 1761.*

“I shall apprise M. de Saint Florentin that I desire to be put formally upon my trial, and be at liberty to use my natural right, and perform its duties, giving further notice that I shall be driven to the necessity of demanding it publicly if my request continues to be unattended to.”—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 6th 1761.*

“I give warning also that I have taken such steps as render it impossible for the Government to prevent the purity of my motives from being known, and my being regularly put upon my trial; that it is contrary to usage and justice in any country, civilized or not to condemn a man unheard, unopposed, &c. I therefore entreated them to choose the alternative of destroying, or at least banishing, a man whom Europe had honoured with the title of ‘the Friend of Men,’ or of permitting him the exercise of a natural right.”—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 12th 1761.*

I then gave him up entirely. This I stated to the minister to whom an offensive memorial had been addressed, before I received your letter, and who very properly lays it to my charge. I answered all questions by telling him, that in future I would not ask him for any thing; that I discarded all fruitless solicitude; that I would now only think of my family, having at length resolved to have nothing more to do with the person in whose favour you have addressed me *. Believe me, Sir, when a man who has been tried by years and misfortune, and has moreover such a reputation that young people of whom he absolutely knows nothing choose him for their arbitrator :—when such a man comes to this determination he must have very sound and coherent reasons for it. At all events, I do not wish to deprive him of the few friends he may still possess. So far am I from wishing him harm, that I even rid him of one of his persecutors. I do not trouble him for any redress, and am till less desirous of reconciliation. This word, which is but seldom exchanged between father and son, much less between morality and vice, and which I do not consider synonymous with mercy, forms no part of my vocabulary. I hope it may one day have a conspicuous place in his. As soon, however, as the name of the place in which he may settle is known to us,

* It will soon be seen whether or not he persisted in this determination.

care shall be taken that he regularly receives the hundred francs a month which justice has directed should be allowed him out of his income. It is true, he might have had monthly what he now receives in the course of a year; and this sum would become his station in life. But he has been pleased to sacrifice his income to litigation; and whenever any one offered to put his affairs in order, he chose to overturn every thing *."

Such a letter could neither convince the mind nor cool the zeal of Michaud, nor did he leave it unanswered. We give his reply.

"I hope you will not consider importunate the further observations which I have the honour of addressing to you. I have too great a regard for you, I place too much reliance upon your kindness, and feel too deeply the duty which friendship imposes on me, to consider as your final answer the letter you have done me the honour of writing to me. I beg that I may be permitted to discuss the several points which it contains. Your son, most assuredly, can have but one danger to fear, that of finding your heart irrecoverably estranged.

"The judgment against him, in consequence of Baron Moans's complaint, is of no importance whatever. It would but ill become me to give you an opinion upon propriety of conduct, for I am sure you

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Procureur du Roi, Michaud, dated January 31st 1776.

do not condemn your son in that affair; but the forms of justice are my profession, and I solemnly declare to you that nothing is more ridiculous nor more unjust than that very judgment, which is sure to fall to the ground the moment you choose to protest against its execution.

“Neither do your son’s creditors make me feel any uneasiness on his account. You are his guardian; and though his affairs may be much embarrassed, their adjustment is not beyond your prudence and ability.

“The king’s order will never be enforced against the Count of Mirabeau, except at your instance. Allow me to observe that your son cannot yet be considered refractory as regards that order. A prisoner is in custody, his detention is not voluntary; and if he recovers his freedom, he does not disobey: he only makes use of the means which his skill suggests. His safe custody was not left to himself. Besides, the high estimation in which you are held would enable you to arrange with ministers an affair that might be attended with much greater danger than this. Your displeasure then is the only real affliction which stands in your son’s way, and if he could but induce you to relent, he would still have an open field before him. I am strangely surprised at what you state respecting a memorial which the Count has addressed to the minister, and the blame of which was laid to you. I made a point of calling upon your son immediately; he showed me a copy of a letter

which he had written to the Count of Saint-Germain, assuring me that he had sent no other.

“ I by no means approve of that letter, which was evidently written under momentary excitement and strong anxiety of mind. But permit me to observe that this letter does not contain any charge against you, neither does it show any want of respect, nor any thing that resembles an intention of suing you judicially.

“ The Count means to clear himself from the imputations by which he may be aspersed. There can be no doubt that it would have been much better had he not anticipated such imputations, and requested the Minister to intercede with you in his favour. But, at all events this injudicious proceeding on the part of a young man, to whom your dissatisfaction and intended measures of severity had been exaggerated, is not of a nature to justify his ruin, and will not, I should hope, produce it. You will listen, I am sure, to the entreaties of a man, who has no further interest in this affair than to please you, and to ease your heart of an affliction by which it is assuredly oppressed. You will perceive that not to lend a succourable hand to your son at this moment would precipitate his ruin. If he is not relieved, he will fall into the gulf; if he is not restored to your favour, he will have recourse to flight, and you will certainly have cause of regret. Yield, therefore, I entreat you, to your generous feelings; forgive all, and forget a letter which does not state a

single fact, and is already expiated by profound repentance. I trust you will favour me with your last commands *.”

We have transcribed this letter, equally remarkable for force and ingenuousness, being desirous that the reader should hear Mirabeau's justification from a third and disinterested party,—a justification which has hitherto been read only in the statements written by Mirabeau himself. Moreover the arguments of a man of truth like Michaud, were so pressing and demonstrative, that they stamped him, as they had done his unfortunate client, with the fault of being too much in the right. The Marquis, more exasperated than ever, made no reply to Michaud. Mirabeau therefore remained in painful perplexity. Wavering betwixt twenty plans abandoned as soon as conceived, he consulted the Marchioness of Mirabeau concerning a rash project which he at length formed.

“ If I thought that by remaining quiet I should unmolested, I would be silent, and endeavour to gain a livelihood by my pen. But who will secure me against being arrested? And, in good earnest, I am quite sick of prisons. On the other hand, I have a great aversion to go abroad; it amounts to renouncing one's country, and sending in one's resignation. I neither can nor will do either. I fancy that a bold

* Unpublished letter from the Procureur du Roi, Michaud, to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated February 8th 1776.

stroke, such as suddenly appearing at Court, might be advantageous to me, by making me known to the Count of Saint Germain, on whom I might produce a greater impression in a quarter of an hour's conversation, than by a hundred letters. But he must first be tried on this point, as it would be imprudent wantonly to expose myself to another detention, which I could not end when I chose, as I can do the present*."

Having been dissuaded by his mother, Mirabeau made another attempt to soften his father; but Michaud's last letter, which had been rather too candid and bold, proved an insurmountable obstacle. The Marquis sent Mirabeau a fulminating reply, to which the latter referred when he wrote to his father two years subsequently.

"Your views and intentions have at length become quite clear: your hatred is now exposed without disguise or evasion. You have thrust me from your heart, from my family, and from my country; you wished to dissolve, as much as you were able, the natural and social ties that bound me to France. The curse was explicit, and the more terrible, because you would not even condescend to be angry. Dungeons and chains would not have made such an impression on my mind, nor lacerated my feelings so much. So great was my despair, that it deprived me of all power of reflection.

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated February 10th 1776.

I formed no plan, I came to no resolution. I had still a friend, and one only. My repeated losses greatly enhanced the value of that treasure: I abandoned myself to all the illusions of love, and was myself surprised at the energy of my passion. She alone reconciles me to life *."

We shall abridge as much as possible this part of our narrative. It was known that Mirabeau was concealed in the town of Pontarlier; he was hunted from house to house, and evil reports again disturbed the Marquis of Monnier, by whom they had hitherto been either evaded or contradicted. They incensed him against his unfortunate and guilty wife, who was constantly watched by her own servants. She had to submit to all kinds of humiliation, even to acts of violence, and she ultimately took refuge with her family at Dijon, where she arrived the 25th of January 1776.

The cause of her journey naturally produced a great sensation, and placed her in a painful predicament. Though M. de Ruffey was very virtuous, he was still a severe man. His wife, whose letters, many of which we possess, give us a high opinion of her, was a kind mother, but her morals were as rigid as they were pure. Their bitter and deep sorrow for the past was soon increased by their anxiety about the future.

Mirabeau followed Sophie closely.

* Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. i. p. 371, 372.

"I was so situated that I was no longer able to do any thing but commit errors *. I know it has been supposed that I had already made up my mind to elope with Madame de Monnier: but really, time, place, and circumstances might have been better chosen! We had not thirty louis d'or between us, and I had not the least doubt of my being closely watched. Can any but a dolt suppose that to pave the way for such an act, I should have sent her from a country which borders on Switzerland, to the interior of the kingdom, and have entrusted her to the care of her mother and family †."

"No sooner had I reached Dijon than Madame de Ruffey discovered me there, and had me arrested, by giving information to the grand provost. At that moment all my thoughts were employed in devising means to prevent rumours that might consummate Madame de Monnier's ruin in the mind of her husband. The gentlemanly conduct of the grand provost (M. de Montherot), a man highly esteemed, inspired me with the hope of inducing him to silence †. I entreated him to take measures that my

* Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. i. p. 375.

† Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. i. p. 380.

‡ M. de Montherot, M. de Changey, M. Dallègre, the Bailli of Aulan, the Abbé Choquart, Sigras, and all the superiors and keepers of Mirabeau, with the sole exception of Saint-Mauris, took a very lively interest in his fate.

adventure might remain unknown. He willingly acquiesced, for Madame de Ruffey had not been able to avoid qualifying in some measure her information. He disguised my name, sent his subordinates on a wrong scent, left me at liberty on parole, wrote to the minister in my behalf, even went so far as to send him back his first order which remanded me to Joux, and tried to assuage Madame de Ruffey's displeasure, which had reduced her daughter to despair*."

"I have quieted the head and the heart of my poor friend; but she has been placed under greater restraint. She is locked up, her paper is taken away, spies are set about her person, and there is as vigilant a watch kept as if the house were threatened by robbers. She is treated like a child whose notions and fancies will soon be overcome. This is very foolish, for her mind is as energetic as her fancy is vigorous and fruitful†. I know her disposition well; her nature is gentle but firm. She is not a woman who makes a great stir outwardly, but her heart is a volcano. She will appear calm and tranquil a quarter of an hour before the catastrophe, which will inevitably take place if

"I send you a copy of the letter which M. de Montherot wrote in my behalf to the Minister. It is written in the strongest terms; but once more my father's influence is triumphant."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated April 16th 1776.*

* Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. i. p. 376.

† Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 379.

she is reduced to despair *. Persecution could therefore only irritate her without putting her out of patience. What ought to have been Madame de Ruffey's object? Undoubtedly, to reconcile her daughter to her son-in-law. But if harsh words, and the humiliation of being watched, were sufficient to induce her to fly from her home, it was probable that violent treatment, and an inquisition a thousand times more severe, would not be more patiently endured. Was it by rendering her much more wretched at her father's than she had been with her husband, that they hoped to make her return to her duty? This policy was equally erroneous and unnatural, because, when placed between these two evils, the convent was the natural asylum she would choose; and if her mother reduced her to such extremity, she would become instrumental in spreading reports which it was so much her interest to suppress. Imagine my friend's affliction. My patience was tried, and I sustained hers. I had to suffer every thing, and I engaged her to suffer. She would certainly never have returned to Pontarlier, had I not requested it as a proof of her attachment to me. She

* Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 285. This prediction was but too completely verified twelve years after, as will be seen in the sequel of this work. We shall previously have frequent occasion to prove this part of Sophie's character.

went thither on the 24th of March 1776, and I remained at Dijon *."

Mirabeau escaped from the danger of returning to the fortress of Joux. As soon as Sophie had left for Pontarlier, he surrendered himself prisoner at the castle of Dijon, the commandant of which (M. de Changey †) became his friend and protector. Aided by this excellent man, by M. de Montherot, and by the Marchioness of Mirabeau, the prisoner prosecuted his measures to obtain his entire release. He applied for this purpose to the virtuous Malesherbes. He continued to request that he might at least be allowed to resume his duty in the army. Commissioners were appointed to report upon the subject of his imprisonment ‡. Their report was favourable §; only they were afraid that Mirabeau would, on regain-

* Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 380, and the following.

† Peuchet, inaccurate in everything, calls him M. Grancey, vol. i. pp. 191, 193, 196, 205.

‡ "M. de Montpezat was the reporter, (*Original Letters from Vincennes*, vol. i. p. 255,) and afterwards M. Lemoine de la Clartière, Counsellor in the Court of Aids, Commissioner of the Council."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated April 6th 1776*. We see by a letter dated March 31st, that Mirabeau much regretted M. de Montpezat, "a man deserving of esteem, much respected, and beyond the reach of favour."—*Ibid.*, March 31st 1776.

§ "M. de Changey, who really bestows a generous attention to my case, has had a long interview with M. de Montpezat. He cannot possibly be better disposed in my favour, and he told the

ing his freedom, again demand satisfaction from the Baron of Moans. They were, therefore, anxious that this affair, in which judgment had gone by default, should first be settled by a peremptory decree. This being done, he was to recover his liberty immediately. Mirabeau urged that the proceedings should be brought before the Parliament of Dijon, or that he should at least be allowed to come to Paris in safety, where he might offer an explanation on the subject. The Marquis of Mirabeau, on the other hand, demanded the removal of his son to Alsace; the latter used all his powers to resist this demand, convinced as he was that all his future prospects were at stake.

“ Do not forget that this is the decisive moment : if my affairs are not terminated at present, I shall be in captivity for years to come. If you do not procure my release, my ruin will be complete. If I again fall under my father’s controul, I am a lost man *.”

latter summarily, 1st, That it would be better for my interest if I were at Paris instead of being here, and that you ought to ask this of the minister; 2nd, That the whole council is in my favour; 3rd, That my detention cannot be of long duration; 4th, That it is first wished I should be relieved from the decree (Villeneuve Moans) to save me from committing fresh violence; 5th, That the passion imputed to me appeared quite simple; that they wished however to part me from the lady (M. de Changey proved that I was far enough from her).”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated April 23rd 1776.*

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated March 31st 1776.

When he was informed that a fresh removal was in contemplation, he asked, as he had done before, why they always wished to make him change his quarters, removing him from places where he had made himself known and beloved, to drag him to others where he was unknown and suspected. The idea of being removed vexed him sorely *, but being soon assured of the impossibility of escape from it, and that of avoiding another imprisonment, he would have preferred Pierre-en-Scise †, or Stenay ‡, or the prison of the Abbaye at Paris §.

* “ Another point of your request will be, if you please, that they do not remove me before my affairs have been settled. Removals are humiliating and disagreeable ; always new faces, and always publicity. The reasons which might have rendered it objectionable that I should be in Burgundy no longer exist. They have even turned in my favour ; for the lady has returned to her husband ; and as her family, who reside at this place, have an eye on me which cannot but quiet their apprehensions, I am very desirous to remain here to await quietly the termination of my case.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated March 22nd 1776.*

† State prison, built on the summit of a rock near the entrance of the city of Lyons. This fortress was pulled down in 1798.

‡ “ If it is absolutely necessary that I should leave this town (Dijon), where everybody takes an interest in me, where I am much at liberty, and that you cannot obtain Pierre-en-Scise, ask for Stenay in the three bishoprics. Its commandant is an intimate friend of M. de Montherot, and it is only thirty-six leagues from Paris.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated April 16th 1776.*

§ “ I asked that I might be taken to the Abbaye at Paris, as you had thought proper that I should not remain at Dijon.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. de Malesherbes, dated May 3rd, 1776.*

In these alternatives of dungeons, another citadel was chosen, namely, that of Dourlens *, and we find it in a letter from the implacable Marquis—

“ The order has been given to conduct him thither, ever since the 30th of April last, but he counterfeits illness, and has certificates †. He and the physicians are believed, and he remains ‡.”

Mirabeau, constantly foiled in the different measures of safety he attempted to pursue, was dreadfully embarrassed, and did not know what to resolve upon §, when all at once Malesherbes caused it

* It was the place of detention which Mirabeau most feared.

“ Above all things, no Alsace ; it is an abominable conspiracy of which I see the drift.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated April 16th 1776.*

† “ If the orders come directly I shall keep my bed, which I ought to have done long ago, on account of my incessant want of sleep, and the absolute disorder of my chest, which no longer allows me to speak two words consecutively.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated April 16th 1776.*

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 19th 1776. Mirabeau had also been informed of this determination.

“ I have been apprised, through an unaccountable indiscretion of Madame de Ruffey, that I am going to be removed to the fortress of Dourlens.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated May 3rd 1776.*

“ Nothing will thus be wanting to the anguish and anxiety which the present and the future occasion to a man so constantly, so singularly unfortunate as I am.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated May 24th 1776.*

§ Twenty letters attest it, besides those we have previously cited. It would be superfluous to give extracts.

to be suggested to him that he should go abroad, and try to obtain rank in a foreign service; adding, that the fugitive's affairs were more likely to come to a settlement during his absence. It was further hinted to him that this advice was the last service he could obtain from the minister, who was about to retire from office *.

This strange fact, advanced by Mirabeau †, and which might be supposed to arise from the necessity of his defence, and to be consequently a mere unfounded allegation, is proved by the following passage from a letter in which we immediately recognise the style and character of the Marquis—

“ Did not this Malesherbes, with his effusions of philanthropy, and his fine republican feelings, meet my expostulations by saying that it was quite natural that a man should try to obtain his release ‡ ? ”

* Malesherbes' resignation took place on the 12th of May 1776.

† See, in particular, “ Original Letters from Vincennes,” vol. i. p. 387.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated July 1st 1780. Here are other testimonies nearer to the period of the event.

“ M. de Malesherbes' retirement comes upon me like a thunder-bolt; there now remains nothing more for me to do than to follow his advice.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Sophie, dated May 9th 1776.*

“ You know that my escape was advised by M. de Malesherbes, and that it could not hurt M. de Changey, as it was through you that I learnt all this.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated October 19th 1776.*

From this moment, Mirabeau, seeing that nothing could prevent his father's influence from crushing him, had recourse to the step he had so long deferred, and determined to escape *. His parole was almost the only tie which kept him in a place, where we have already stated the sort of *freedom* he enjoyed,—a place which had been assigned to him more as a residence than as a prison, and “where he experienced a kind of reprieve †.” His parole was given back to him by M. de Changey, who had become bail for him, undertaken his defence, and rendered him many services. Mirabeau set out on the 25th of May, and travelled to Switzerland under the name of the Count of Beaumont‡, and

* “I have been obliged to escape, as, even with the most just of ministers, you were unable to procure me my release, and prevent a removal which filled the cup of my despair, and led to all that ensued.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated November 21st 1776.*

† Letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis of Marignane, dated September 5th 1777. Brief and Counsel's Opinion on the Case of the Countess of Mirabeau, p. 32. Aix, J. B. Mouret, 1783, 4to, 162 pp.

‡ Letter already quoted, from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 19th 1776. Beaumont was the name (often borne by the junior branches of the family) of an estate belonging to the Marquis of Mirabeau. Our account might be impugned by the presumption of a clandestine escape founded on a note adduced at the end of the collection of Letters from Vincennes, vol. iv. p. 352. We should in that case reply that both the note and our account are correct. It was not M. de Changey whom Mirabeau had to fear, for he was then at Paris supporting the Marchioness of Mirabeau's useless entreaties: it was M. de Montherot. With regard to

took up his abode at the village of Verrières, close to Pontarlier.

Sophie, on her return to that town, did not experience the kind reception and the tranquillity that had been promised.

“Her mother, struck with terror, or rather with madness, at the news of my flight, immediately despatched her son to Pontarlier with directions to take her daughter to the convent *.”

This resolution, together with the false measures before adopted, which had reduced a woman excited by a most violent attachment, to the last extremity of despair, have been questioned in some of the Marquis of Mirabeau’s letters, in some of the law proceedings, and in certain pretended biographical notices. Madame de Ruffey herself, aware of the injury done by her imprudent severity, endeavoured to deny it.

“Has your husband used you harshly? Too much lenity can alone be imputed to him. Your father, fearful that he might not be able to contain himself,

an unsuccessful attempt made on the 15th of May 1776, Mirabeau wrote to his mother on the 16th.

“An accident, fortunate in the sequel, but very distressing at the time, has protracted my escape, which was fixed for yesterday. M. de Montherot, afraid of committing himself, made a great disturbance, which was unreasonable in every respect. The prudence of Madame de Changey and her active benevolence parried the blow, at least in a great measure, and the preparations for departure have been made to appear only those of a pleasure party of young people.”

* Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. i. p. 393.

did not wish to see you. Your brother and sister have done you no other injury than to oppose your flight by reasoning with you, and watching over you. Having tried mild measures, they were forced to frustrate your attempt openly *."

"O mother!" replied Sophie, "you speak of kindness and indulgence! Do you no longer remember that you caused the Count to be arrested at Dijon? Remember the letters which you wrote to M. de Monnier, in order that I should find the same slavery on my return to him? The Count was under your own eye, quiet, imprisoned, resigned. We were submissive, being satisfied with writing to each other; but you did not think him sufficiently unhappy, because M. de Changey paid him those attentions which one gentleman owes to another. I question whether my brother and sister's behaviour towards me can be called 'reasoning' and 'mildness.' They took advantage of my disconsolate situation, spoke only in threats, overwhelmed me with harsh words and cutting raillery, perpetually teased M. de Monnier to give his consent to my being placed in a convent, urged him to watch me and intercept my letters, and aided him in so doing; they even extorted a promise from him to refuse me the merest trifles, if I at all appeared to have a wish for them. My sister placed the whole town in her confidence, by going to vent her

* Unpublished letter from Madame de Ruffey to her daughter, dated July 12th 1777.

displeasure upon such of my friends as she suspected of doing me an act of kindness. She made use of the foulest epithets in talking of me. I wished to be in a convent, and I told them so ; but I wished to be there solely on M. de Monnier's authority, and to be allowed to write there. But all was in vain : they were in quest of a house of correction, and it was by treating me like an insane person that they wished to gain my affection ! M. de Monnier, full of their suggestions, and in execution of their commands, rendered life a burthen to me. He took my letters, submitted them to the perusal of the parish priest, kept them two days without telling me a word about them, and during that time affected to pay me numberless attentions, against which I was on my guard, knowing his hypocrisy. He burst forth at length into fits of violence ; and gave his word of honour that he would obtain a *lettre de cachet* against me *, though he was well aware I had so strong an aversion to a convent, that I assured him I would there stab myself, and was capable of doing it. †”

Mirabeau, who had taken refuge at Verrières, a village only a league from Pontarlier, but on a foreign territory, could not remain there, for fear of Saint-Mauris's persecutions. He therefore went on to

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to her mother, dated July 18th 1777.

† Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated August 1st 1776.

Geneva, and in crossing the lake nearly perished in a storm. His sister, Madame de Cabris, was at Lyons, and he saw her there. She engaged him to quit the kingdom with Sophie, by representing to him her terrors, her entreaties, and her dangers. She offered to aid the two lovers, even to accompany them, conjointly with an adventurer named Brianson *, who attended her everywhere. These attempts failed for some time; and Mirabeau, who distrusted his attachment, which did not yet completely blind him, went to hide himself a hundred leagues off in Provence, to escape from the misguidance of love and despair.

Meanwhile, Sophie was quite disconsolate at Pontarlier. We have most of the letters which she wrote to Mirabeau. She daily proposed to him new means of escape †. Madame de Ruffey suspected as much.

“She has informed M. de Monnier that I want to escape; that the whole family will make him answerable for it, as they cannot prevail upon him to

* Denis Jean Augustin Jausserandy Brianson, ex-officer of the regiment Royal Roussillon, born in 1750. He was an obscure individual, without profession, fortune, or morals; always hid, always wandering, always pursued, and forced to have recourse to expedients to live. Yet Peuchet makes him Governor of Grasse, though that place had no governor. Vol. i. p. 126.

† “It is true that he made the first proposal to go, and the Ruffeys are well aware of it, as the two letters from Dijon, in which you even traced me a plan for it, are in their possession.”—*Original Letters from Vincennes*, vol. i. p. 39.

place me in a convent. He tells her, in reply, that he is not afraid of it; that her letter will not mend matters; that she has taken a false alarm; that he believes me very repentant; that if she had kept me when he had requested her to do so, all this would not have happened; finally, that he will not in the least alter his course, nor put up bars. It was probably proposed to put me in a cage. . . . What an amiable family *!"

The reader must perceive how absurd and ill-judged was the severity by which they continued to irritate a young woman, already so deeply enamoured, who might perhaps have been reclaimed by kind treatment, by kind and sensible remonstrances, during the FIVE WHOLE MONTHS which elapsed between her return to her husband's home and her flight†. But Sophie was more and more persecuted. Mirabeau, who had left Provence, continued to wander and conceal himself. The letters from the lovers to each other did not always reach their destination.

"Mind," said she, "if you do not write to me, if I do not hear from you, I will no longer be answerable for any thing. At night I read all your protestations.

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, under the name of the Count of Montchevrey, dated June 4th 1776.

† Our extracts will enable the reader to appreciate the good faith or the inaccuracy of Peuchet, who can only find "a vain pretence for escape in the atrocious manner, as Mirabeau states, in which he and his mistress were treated." Vol. i. p. 186. The author's intentions and style are equally discernible from this passage.

O my friend ! I repeat them after you ; yes ! I swear that I will be yours, and yours only. Nothing shall diminish my love for you. I have told you a thousand times, that I will neither survive you nor your love. I know that they have not done me all the harm they wished, but they have done all they had it in their power to do. There are things beyond their power : they cannot deprive me of your affection. It is my only treasure, all I esteem, all I love in the world ; I am sure that they can never deprive me of it, for I shall never deserve to lose it ! Fear nothing ! Whatever snares are laid for me, I shall escape them. I have already declared that were I to see, even in your handwriting, that you loved me no longer—were it sealed with our private motto, accompanied by all the marks that might make me recognise it, I should still consider it a forgery, so certain am I of you, such reliance do I place on your protestations, and on your affection *. Hear me : I can no longer endure all this suffering ; it is too distressing to be at such a distance from my husband. Let us meet again, or let me die !

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated June 24th 1776. Let us here observe that this letter justifies one of Mirabeau's positive assertions:—"Madame de Monnier never once deceived her husband, except when he chose to be deceived. She told him that she loved me, that she should always do so, that she would never cease writing to me, and that poison or flight should save her from the convent."—*Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes*, vol. i. p. 396.

I shall not be here next year, for I now suffer more than I can or will bear. To live away from you is dying a thousand deaths every day. When I consider that I should have years to wait, my heart fails me. After what we have already done, there is no receding : let us then make haste to render each other happy. I ask for you alone. All conditions will be agreeable to me, provided I share your fate, and that we never part *. What do you wait for then? Oh ! let us make haste, my love ! My health, for I am dying here, your own, for you would soon follow me, the want we have of each other—every thing requires it †. Each moment do I feel the more that I cannot exist or be happy except through and near you. Sophie suffers too much on account of this forced separation, to endure it long. Come quickly, come, or you will no longer have a Sophie ‡. Alas ! you no longer write to me ! Why did you ever do so ? Why did you not leave me to die without shaking by your silence my certainty of your love ! Death would have been sweet compared with what I suffer. Your affection is every thing to me ; I see, I act, and feel only through it, for it is identic with my life, and I cannot lose it but with my life. If you write again, come for a short time at least, that I

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated June 26th 1776.

† Letter from the same to the same, dated July 16th 1776.

‡ The same, dated August 16th 1776.

may see you once more, and yield my last breath with your hand on my heart, and swearing to you that I lived for you alone *. Am I then never to receive the signal of departure? You stated that we should not feel want in our place of refuge; that you would become a teacher of languages, music, and painting †. You have surely the same idea still; and what will I not do?—no matter, whether I have to work at home, or in a shop, or as a nursery maid. I will do any thing you like, provided we are together. There is nothing I would not undertake to be near you: no occupation would startle me, and I am terribly so at my present situation. I can endure it no longer; it must have an end; I repeat over and over again, GABRIEL OR DEATH ‡!”

These burning agitations of mind and heart unsettled Mirabeau no less than it did Sophie. His internal anguish was the more distressing, because a remnant of

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated August 20th 1776.

† Cadet de Gassicourt, in his notice published in the Year VIII, and full of errors which escaped the good faith of that author, whose only fault is having set up as a biographer, without being able, or having taken the necessary measures to accomplish the task, states, p. 17, that Mirabeau became an usher in Holland. This fact is not more true than a great many others, and yet the author has repeated it in p. 13 of a second edition, published in 1822.

‡ Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated August 1st 1776.

reason forbade him to yield to the desperate proposal of elopement and expatriation.

“Alas! Yes: I confess my fault; I will not even palliate it;—I wish only to expose its cause and my motives. Before I committed it, I struggled violently with myself, and I yielded to my attachment from inability to withstand it. I was unmanned by her tears and my own regret; burning with love and indignation; and forced to a choice between that and a greater evil*.”

Let us judge, by the two following letters, of the unhappy man’s feelings.

“O Louisa †! O Pylades ‡! What shall I add to my letters? My fate is becoming worse every instant. I have no news: it appears that I am not yet to receive any from you. But about Sophie? My whole being is unsettled. I do not know what to resolve upon, and am unable to wait. To render my embarrassment complete, the commandant of the town leaves this place. He asked me very politely, but very earnestly, to give him my name and some references, excusing himself on account of the duties of his office, &c. I gave him the name of Monchevrey; he seemed to have doubts, and asked me in what regiment I served. I told him, and the

* Original Letter from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 362.

† Name of Madame de Cabris.

‡ Name which Mirabeau gave to Brianson, then with Madame de Cabris, at Lyons.

deception will be easily discovered. He related to me many adventures of refugees ; I kept my countenance ; but he is sure to set inquiries on foot. I told him that I was a victim of power ; that I had made up my mind to go to Turin, and beg an asylum of the king, but was waiting for positive orders from France. I requested him to inform me whether he had received instructions to make inquiries ; he told me he had not ; that the most prudent course would be to go to Turin ; that the king was kindness itself ; that some adventurers from Switzerland, having misbehaved, had occasioned such distrust of late, that it was expected the commandants would use the greatest precautions ; that however with letters of introduction, I should be received at Chambery and at Turin with all possible kindness and distinction. This enables me to perceive that it is prudent to make only a short stay here. But nothing on earth shall induce me to leave this country until I receive positive orders. If our affairs force me to go to Chambery, try if you can obtain some letters of introduction for me. If Pylades had been in Provence, I would have gone instantly to Nice ; but I await your arrangements here. Write to Sophie ; tell her that she must have received six packets from me, one from Verrières dated 5th instant, one from Morges dated the 6th, one from Geneva dated the 7th, another from Geneva dated the 8th, one from Tonon dated the 9th, another despatched to-day the 12th. Good God ! what

will be the end of all this? I must not press her. O Sophie! what do I not sacrifice to love! I embrace you tenderly*.”

“I have nothing new for you my amiable sister; my sorrow increases daily, and my unsettled health remains pretty much the same. I have not had a word from France since the 5th instant; and we have now reached the 15th. Sophie’s letter was desperate; I have every thing to fear on her account. Alas! she is the only object that now occupies me. Why need I fear their persecutions, their efforts and their lawsuits? If I am to be separated from her, I prefer tortures and death to a dungeon! I am thus banished from my country, separated from you, without the hope of again seeing my son, and lost to all my friends, without having derived from my devotedness any benefit that can compensate for the smallest of my losses! I have sacrificed all to love, and yet have done nothing for love. I shall never dare to return to my country, should I even wish it. Exposed to the insulting pity of those poor beings who think themselves wise, because they are incapable of forming any attachment; tortured by those vipers which dare to slander me at a distance, by saying that I have robbed Sophie and suborned her; severely condemned by fools who call their prejudices morality;—what should I do in France?—and what can I wish to

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his sister, Madame de Cabris, dated from Tonon (Thonon) in Savoy, June 12th 1776.

do far away from Sophie? My situation is a violent disease which tortures my soul, and gnaws all my physical energy. Love is the only remedy. If it escape me I shall sink under my burthen . . . My dear sister, I try all manner of means, I struggle in every sense. Strive to put Sophie in possession of the enclosed: it contains merely a few lines, but those are quite essential to keep up her courage, and give her some consolation. Write to me. Do write. I never was more in want of you. I am quite sure that you have written to me: but the post keeps pace with neither my head nor my heart *."

When Mirabeau escaped from the Castle of Dijon, his father was in doubt whether or not he should have him pursued.

"Some kind-hearted friends, and among others the Duke of Nivernois, were of opinion that I should not send after that young madman, but leave him to carve out his own destiny by some decided catastrophe.

"I interrogated myself for a considerable time. At length the voice of conscience and honour, which I consulted in the silence of night, gained the victory in my heart †."

The Marquis's measures were rapid. On the 4th

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame de Cabris, dated June 15th 1776, dated also from Thonon.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 22nd 1776.

of June, the minister Amelot, issued a warrant for Mirabeau's arrest. We possess this document, bearing a marginal note addressed to the Syndic of the Inspector of Police.

"I have been well served by my friends. The system is stricter. I have obtained the Mont St. Michel*. I think this prison is a secure one although Montgomery escaped from it†; because there is, in the first place, the castle, then the mountain entirely surrounded by a wall, then comes a passage through the sands, of rather considerable length, where guides are necessary under pain of being buried in the quicksands‡. I lost not a moment, and I may even say that I was served with the orders at a moment's notice. I have at length made up my mind to have an Inspector of Police, a chosen man, unequalled in all Europe for this sort of thing, who, in consideration of a sum of money has taken upon himself to apprehend and conduct him to his prison §. He is bearer of the most precise orders

* One of the strongest prisons in France, situated upon a rock advancing into the sea, on the coast of Normandy, and four leagues from Avranches. Mirabeau draws a frightful picture of it in the "Lettres de Cachet," vol. i. p. 280; but without mentioning that he was to have been removed thither.

† Same letter, dated August 12th 1776.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 16th 1776.

§ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated July 4th 1776.

for all foreign courts, and to all our ambassadors. But only imagine the enormous expense thus incurred for this man, and two others he takes with him; besides the expense of travelling post, and the disbursements requisite to bribe spies. My resolution is now taken *."

The Inspector Muron immediately took the field, accompanied by two others, one of whom was M. de Brugnères, who afterwards captured Mirabeau, and subsequently became his confidential agent†. The police agents left Paris on the 6th of July, and vainly endeavoured during nearly two months to discover his place of retreat. We have mentioned the rather curious details of these transactions in the Appendix at the end of the present volume.

It may easily be conceived that the fruitlessness of so much exertions and expense, was a source of severe mortification to the Marquis of Mirabeau.

"I learnt he was in Savoy. He has been followed to that country, but the rascal decamps every day. He possesses the secret of escaping from those cowardly or knavish hounds, and he will ravage the world with his

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated July 14th 1776. We find there the following passage:—

"Only imagine the expense: here is the tax; sixteen francs ten sous per post, because he takes two men with him, paid double in a foreign country. Fifteen francs per diem, and five francs for each of his agents; and then the private expenses for bribing spies."

† Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. i. pp. 16, 71, 198, 229, 245.

detestable talents*. Their reports would have driven me to despair, were I not in a manner, steeled against the tricks of fortune, or rather, profoundly resigned to the will of Providence†. My people, either knaves or idiots, have now returned to Lorgues, where they have found nothing but the form of the beast‡. Instead of watching Brianson, they took it into their heads that our rogue had crossed the sea, and thus they entirely missed him.

“ Meanwhile, I received information, through some intercepted letters, that our man was in the territory of Grasse, shut up in a room with the very shutters closed, and where he did not see day-light. Every night Brianson was with him. Instead of sticking close to this man whom they knew to be his guide, they conversed with him, supped with him, and then went gaping at the stars! § ”

Mirabeau, directed either by chance, or by address, had followed a route which made him, it is true, elude discovery, but which led him to the place where his faults and misfortunes were to reach their climax. He

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to Count du Saillant, dated July 11th 1776.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 16th 1776.

‡ The same, dated Lorgues, August 29th 1776. Lorgues, in Provence, two leagues from Draguignan.

§ Letter already quoted, from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 16th 1776.

returned to Switzerland, and to the neighbourhood of Pontarlier. All his steps had been advised, all his measures supported, by Brianson and Madame de Cabris. This lady had written, less than a month before, to Sophie in the following terms :—

“ My dear friend, Brianson informs you that I am to decide upon your fate. Ah ! Sophie, is not that telling you that you may be assured of happiness? My answer is that I consent to every thing. I think you will do well to make haste : you understand me. Love *your sister* who is tenderly attached to you and longs only for the time when you shall be reunited *.”

Nevertheless, shortly after, Brianson betrayed to the agents of the Marquis the true route taken by Mirabeau.

“ Brianson, probably converted through fear of the consequences †, and otherwise highly dissatisfied, gave or showed them (the inspectors) a letter, stating that he (Mirabeau) was proceeding to Savoy, and thence

* Unpublished letter from Madame de Cabris to Sophie, dated Lyons, July 27th 1776. See also Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. iv. p. 137. In short, Sophie herself, alluding to this letter, wrote to Mirabeau on the 18th of August 1776, as follows :—

“ I have received a letter from Louise (Madame de Cabris). What pleasure it gives me ! She tells me that she consents to every thing. We are then going to be happy ! we shall not be separated again !”

† We shall presently show that Brianson's treachery was not the effect of “ fear,” but proceeded from resentment against Mirabeau.

to Verrières in Switzerland. They are hastening thither*.

Brianson thus betrayed the secret of a route which he had himself traced out, and wanted to prevent the execution of a project suggested and planned by himself. But what was the cause of this inconsistent and sudden perfidy? Mirabeau had already found occasion to complain of an act of cowardice, if not treachery, on his part.

“He left me †, (whilst I had the fever,) fighting with twelve boatmen of the Rhône, whom the dastard had irritated much against my will, and then run away. I had, on this occasion, the happiness of getting out of the scrape without shedding a single drop of blood, whilst the vile coward, who has several times in his life attempted murder, fired two pistols at a man, whom Providence permitted he should miss ‡.”

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 29th 1776.

† June 30th 1776. See Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. iv. p. 353.

‡ Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his sister, Madame du Saillant, dated September 10th 1780. This account is confirmed by the following passage, in a report by the Inspector of Police, Muron, dated July 27th 1776.

“M. de Brianson behaved like a brigand on returning from Secelles (Seyssel) to Lyons. He insulted the boatmen, and threw stones at them; he lost a four-barrelled pistol, and twice missed fire at a boatman, the priming alone going off. What a business it would have turned out had the boatman been killed!”

Subsequently to that period, a violent altercation, which took place between Mirabeau and Brianson, was the cause of an irreconcilable enmity between them.

“ My dear Sister, the real motive for which M. de Brianson, and, consequently, Madame de Cabris, became incensed against me is this: they had concealed me at Lyons; Madame de Cabris fearing some arbitrary act of the government, M. de Brianson indulged in the most vulgar abuse, which notwithstanding my patience, at length roused my anger. This threw him into a perfect fit of frenzy. He said, that my uncle’s or my father’s life should answer for it, should either of them dare to attempt any thing against her. I treated him as the lowest of mankind; he rushed to his sword, I flew to mine; had it not been for Madame de Cabris, we should have cut one another’s throats. Is this the action of a bad son *?”

Although thus informed by Brianson, the Marquis of Mirabeau still doubted or pretended to doubt the success of the measures he had taken.

“ In the present enervated and corrupt times, during the prevailing madness for anarchy, and being on the eve of revolutions brought on because too many poor are hanged, and too few rich, ruffians have a fine game of it, and if they do no more harm, it is because their

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 27th 1780.

claws are not sharp enough *. I shall have spent two hundred and fifty louis at least in vain †, in order to destroy the link of this union of malefactors. You will see that they will not catch him ‡.”

But indeed the police hounds could “catch” him, and easily too; for Mirabeau, after passing “the mountains of the County of Nice, and Turin, the Great St. Bernard, the Valais, &c. §,” had arrived at Verrières, the very spot indicated by Brianson, on the 23rd of August, six days previously to the letter we have just given. In the night of that same day, Sophie, informed by a message, disguised herself in man’s attire, got over the garden wall by means of a ladder, and joined Mirabeau at the place where he was waiting for her, and where they remained until the 15th of September. Why were they not arrested during that

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 16th 1776. The Marquis expresses himself, at a later period, in a similar manner :

“Those people are witty and have good manners, and this age was made for good-for-nothing fellows.”—*Letter inserted in the Case for the Countess of Mirabeau, &c.*, p. 28.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 16th 1776. In another letter the Marquis says :—

“The last year’s excursion cost me six thousand six hundred francs, everything agreed for and settled.”—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 31st 1777.*

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 29th 1776.

§ Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 353.

interval by the agents, who were aware of the place of their retreat? The two fugitives imprudently remained there without even changing their names, as is proved by the proceedings preliminary to the judgment by default. A disguise, however, would have been useless and impossible, in a place so near Pontarlier, where Sophie and Mirabeau were perfectly well known; because they had been seen there, a hundred times, together and separate.

Such a signal want of vigilance on the part of the agents commissioned to arrest Mirabeau, is certainly very extraordinary after their ardent pursuit. It has indeed been asserted that, being deceived either by false dates, purposely inserted in letters intended to be intercepted *, or by the day agreed upon for the departure of Mirabeau and Sophie having been changed, the Inspectors arrived only two days after†. But the fugitives were only two leagues distant, and did not conceal themselves.

We shall not endeavour to account for this singular proceeding, lest we find Mirabeau's anticipations justified

* This supposition is corroborated by a passage in the "Second Brief for Counsel's Opinion in the Case of the Count of Mirabeau," against the Marquis of Monnier, p. 90 of the 12mo edition.

† Letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis of Marignane, dated September 9th 1776, and inserted in the Case for the Countess of Mirabeau, p. 22.

to which he alluded two years after, when he wrote as follows:—

“ The neighbourhood of Switzerland appeared to me your only motive. You were desirous of dissolving, as much as lay in your power, the natural and social ties which bound me to France *.”

This supposition is confirmed by two letters we have before us.

“ I conceive it an obligation imposed upon me to reflect immediately, and continually, upon the means of sealing the expatriation of this wretched madman, and ridding the family of him for ever †. My friends told me that the most advantageous thing for me would be that this scoundrel should seal his own doom by some decided catastrophe, some crime that would cause his banishment for ever from the kingdom ‡.”

We have thus given the particulars, and perhaps at too great length, of Mirabeau's flight, and his painful

* Extract, already quoted, from the Memoir of Mirabeau, bearing date March 1st 1778. Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 352.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 3rd 1776.

‡ Letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis of Marignane, dated September 9th 1776, inserted in the Case for the Countess of Mirabeau, p. 20. See also the letter already quoted, from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 22nd 1776.

efforts to baffle the attempts made to discover him. We have thought that the perusal of the original procès-verbal, which we have placed in the Appendix, would awaken a certain degree of curiosity, on account of the great interest excited by such a man in such a situation, and that it would, besides, assist us in our avowed object of proving that the culpable actions of Mirabeau, as well as his minor faults, were the effect of the unceasing persecutions he underwent, as much and perhaps more than the result of his own ungovernable passions. We could, likewise, furnish a very circumstantial account of the manner in which that time was spent, which the fugitives imprudently lost at Verrières; of the route they followed when they determined upon leaving that place, and of all circumstances connected with this act of madness and despair. But such an account would necessarily be mixed up with many scandalous incidents, which we always reject, because they are beneath the dignity of history which they degrade, and indeed destroy its truth, for history ought to depict the great actions, and not passing incidents in the life of the persons whose career it traces;—it should present their striking features, and not their secret deformities.

We therefore leave such details to the oblivion in which they are now fortunately entombed. But our profound conviction forces us to dwell some time longer upon the principal event, the fatal

notoriety of which has for the last fifty years, been a stain on Mirabeau's memory, and will probably continue so for ever. This is a duty the more incumbent upon us, because we write, as it were, by his own command, and because he asked to be "heard previously to being judged." This wish is expressed many times in the letters from Vincennes. We shall not quote from those letters the passages to which we allude, but merely give an extract from a letter hitherto unknown to the public.

"Having been capable of sacrificing myself to the purest, the most tender, and the most generous love—I repeat, sacrificing myself, voluntary and collectedly (as much so as it is possible to do when in love), with reflection, and after mature consideration—I have at least a right to be heard in my defence, before I am judged*."

It was not, he declares, and we cannot repeat it too often, it was not without hesitation, nor without a struggle that he adopted the fatal resolution of quitting his native country. His father wrote as follows, on the occasion :

"Here are those two mad people, giving a proof that madness is a passion ; for in the present age, when husbands are so benignant, on the one hand a madman,

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madlle. Danvers, written in the Donjon of Vincennes, dated October 23rd 1780.

incapable of sensibility, and on the other a strumpet, invent a new species of outrageous exposure, for the mere pleasure of doing so *."

Mirabeau's biographers, under the influence of the same error, have looked upon his carrying off Sophie, as an act of delirium or of immorality, without stopping to appreciate the causes to which he was forced to yield, and the devotedness which hurried him on. He has however answered them by anticipation :—

"There are hearts which are not to be judged by ordinary principles : that would be taking the horizon for the boundaries of the world †."

In another letter, he explains, after several previous statements, the situation in which circumstances, had placed him.

"I will ask how it can be supposed that a man, allowed to possess certain faculties and some knowledge, should have several times perilled his life, risked his fortune, and lost his liberty, from no other motive than to cause an exposure? What object could he have in such exposure? Was it necessary for me to implicate Madame de Monnier, in order to acquire the reputation of having had an intrigue? Are my character and mind of a nature to lead any one to

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 9th 1776.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 9th 1776.

suppose that I am ambitious of obtaining the success of coxcombs? If my vanity alone had been interested in making a conquest,—a very flattering one, certainly—was it not satisfied*? I was, no doubt, wrong in engaging myself, as I did, with Madame de Monnier; but, supposing the engagement once taken, upon which there was no longer any time to deliberate, was I not justified in seeking and finding every means of serving her? She could, and ought to command every thing from me, short of poisoning or assassination†.”

We find elsewhere, that he speaks in the same sense, almost in the same terms; and he is not now writing a justification to his father; for it may be supposed that such justification might have been adroitly coloured. He wrote to another person, an entire stranger to the family, and who, by her sex, age, and obscure station in society, had no power of rendering any service to the prisoner.

“With regard to the history of Sophie,” said he, “hear me. I swear to you before Almighty God, that Sophie would have ended her days by poison, if I had not responded to her call. She had resolved not to submit to the loss of liberty, even momentarily. She is the mildest, the most feeling, the most amiable, the most affectionate of women, but her placid disposition

* Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 284.

† Idem, vol. i. p. 393.

veils the most impetuous mind. My greatest fault, (and could it be otherwise with a love so young, so strong, and so persecuted?) my principal error lies in having exposed her by our mutual imprudence. All the rest, as I have said, was invincibly linked together. I knew then, as I do now, that it was the greatest of follies to elope with her. But could I allow myself to be thought, could I bring myself to be in reality, ungrateful and pusillanimous? What do I say?—could I allow her to swallow the fatal draught, as I could not doubt she would have done? This is the point of view in which I must be judged; and you will then see that I have sacrificed myself and not her. It was no longer a question of delicacy, it was one of life and death. Could I hesitate *?”

We may still be allowed a few more extracts; for if our duty is understood, we shall be excused for carrying on even beyond the bounds of evidence, in extenuation of Mirabeau's faults, a discussion of the most serious error of his youth.

“ Were I,” he wrote to his uncle, “ to send you the pathetic and heart-rending letter which made me cross the Alps three times, expose my life twenty times, and plunge headlong into the abyss, I might ask you whether, instead of an infamous ravisher, I am not a

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madlle Danvers, written from the Donjon of Vincennes, dated November 9th 1780. We subjoin a fac-simile of this passage.

generous man, who, finding himself more deeply engaged than he ought to have been, but seeing at the same time that as the engagement subsisted, he owed every thing to her whom he had involved by it, and whose life was in jeopardy, wished to pay the penalty of his first fault, and serve, according to her desire, the woman he had ruined, when, with a poniard pointed at her heart, she claimed assistance from him *. The remainder was enforced, it was matter of duty†. Madame de Monnier had no resource but in me; her reputation was lost, and she was exposed to ruin through my fault‡. Was I basely to desert her while I was able to defend her§. After having led her to the brink of the precipice, was I to plunge her into it||? Had I done so, I should have been a prodigy of cowardice, a monster of ingratitude¶. Then I should have deserved my fate; then I should have been the most contemptible of men**. The bare thought excites my horror! She claimed my assistance, and the fulfilment of my promises. I went, I fled, I crossed the Alps, and she came and gave herself up to my honour and good faith††."

"I appeal," added Mirabeau, "to this unfortunate

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his uncle, the Bailli, dated December 25th 1779.

† Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 369.

‡ Idem, p. 393.

§ Idem, p. 393.

|| Idem, p. 397.

¶ Idem, p. 369.

** Idem, p. 393.

†† Idem, p. 397.

woman, who is much more capable of immolating herself for me, than of justifying herself at my expense*.

Let us now listen to Sophie; she will prove a contested fact, and show herself worthy of this confidence.

“Cruel friend, you said to me when we parted, that I had rendered you very unhappy; but can you make any comparison between what I suffer, and the felicity you have made me enjoy? Could I not say as much, and a thousand times more to you, since it is I who have done all †? But you do not reproach me! believe then, also, that I am incapable of entertaining the slightest idea of repentance ‡.”

In another letter, she says to her mother:—

“You mistake, my dear mother: you say that I have been seduced. It was my own will that did every thing. You assert that we were advised to make an exposure: but it could only harm us. We were forced to do it §.”

In another letter, again:—

“If the Marquis (of Monnier) accuses you of having carried me off by force, you will be able to prove by several of my letters, that I was the first to propose it

* Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 397.

† Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated May 28th 1777.

‡ Idem, dated July 6th 1779.

§ Unpublished letter from Sophie to Madame de Ruffey, dated July 11th 1777.

to you, to press you, to command you to do it. There are many of them, in which I expressly urged it. And what could I wish for better than that which assured me of living with you, of hoping every thing from you, of never more quitting you, of being certain of happiness *! In the letters which I propose to you write, with a view to their being produced during the pleadings †, it strikes me, that to make them appear both natural and probable, I must say every thing that I recollect having mentioned at the time. I must talk of the inhabitants of Pontarlier, but without committing any body. I must not recal the history of the letter which the Marquis (of Monnier) stole from me, because that would be giving a value to his copy; but I must repeat the sayings of the priest, which were then mentioned to me, and frequently assert my wish to fly with you; I must also give you assurances of my love, as I have ever done. I think you cannot entertain any scruple respecting this little deception, since we should not make use of it, if Brianson were to return the letters to us ‡. What I write shall contain only

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated June 28th 1777.

† The then projected Appeal from the Judgment by default, passed May 10th 1777, at Pontarlier, against Mirabeau and Sophie.

‡ The letters written by Sophie to Mirabeau, whilst the latter was wandering about the country and concealing himself, remained in the hands of Brianson; and we shall show the use he threatened and attempted to make of them.

the matter that is in the others. The address shall be no other than the usual one—‘For Gabriel.’ They know full well that our letters could not have been forwarded in a direct manner*.”

We have proof that Sophie endeavoured to show herself, under the same aspect, to other persons, whom she believed disposed to serve Mirabeau, and capable of influencing his fate. When writing to them, she generously attributed to herself the first projects of flight. The proof of this is found in two letters from the Bailli of Mirabeau.

“This woman has written to the Countess of Vence, who is a greater fool than any of her race, imperious, vain, and fond of contradiction, though in other respects respectable. She shows here a letter from that Madame de Monnier, in which she accuses herself, and exculpates your madman†. One means of clearing him is contained in the letter written by this woman to the Countess of Vence, in which she entirely accuses herself, and fully exonerates the fellow from the whole business‡.”

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated July 13th 1777.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated February 21st 1778.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated June 3rd 1778. The Countess of Vence, here mentioned, is the lady of whom Mirabeau gives so noble a portrait in the Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 338; vol. ii. pp. 71, 277,

From all these circumstances we may justly conclude that in this affair, Mirabeau was again wrongly judged: an act of devotedness was attributed to the most reckless temerity, and the most depraved immorality. We must at all events allow that he foresaw the fatal consequences of this act; that he struggled so long as he was able, and consistently with the feelings of honour with which a love like his could not fail to inspire him; that he at last yielded to absolute necessity alone; finally, that he was led away more by Sophie, than by himself—more by his generous feelings than by his passion. We must further admit that he had a right to pass the judgment upon himself which exists in a letter he wrote the following year to M. Lenoir. This letter has always appeared to us to contain the truest and most energetic portrait of Mirabeau's private character.

“During the whole course of my youthful but strangely eventful life, pregnant with cruel disappointments, I have ever pursued the same line of conduct,

278; vol. iii. pp. 158, 187, 202, 205, 217, 296, 308, 322, 378, 583. She had been a widow ever since February 1777. It is certain that she endeavoured to serve Mirabeau during his captivity. The following passage in a letter which he wrote to Boucher is a proof of this:—

“The Countess of Vence has restored me to hope. Tell me if it would be impossible to write to her. She is discretion and probity personified.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated August 22nd 1779.*

yet have ever experienced the same fate. I have always been an enthusiastic friend, devoted even to rashness, unceasingly involved in scrapes for other people, and always abandoned by those for whom I committed myself*. I have ever borne the blame of other people's faults, disdaining to offer any excuse for them, because the consciousness of my intentions, and my uprightness were sufficient for my own feelings. I am incapable of defending myself at the expense of any one, even the pusillanimous, the ungrateful, and the treacherous. Nevertheless, I have always been judged upon facts either false in themselves, or entirely distorted; and in spite of all those circumstances, I have never changed either my feelings or my conduct. Such I was, such I am, and such, perhaps, I shall ever be †."

Sophie perfectly appreciated these sacrifices, and her own equalled them. She would even have gone further, had it been in her power—for her passion increased with these struggles. We have described her as disdaining to conceal it, even when the avowal drew down upon her those persecutions which ended in her ruin. At a subsequent period, in the solitude of a dreary prison, deprived of rank, fortune, and liberty, she expressed herself in the same manner, in her com-

* Mirabeau here alludes to Brianson and some others.

† Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. ii. p. 277.

munications to her family, whose pity or pardon she = constantly refused, but from whom she expected, at = least, the means of satisfying the most pressing wants = of nature.

“ I cannot prevent you from despising Sophie. If = you think her deserving of this feeling from you, it is unfortunate for me that you entertain that opinion ; but do not expect that I shall do the same. Of what is not a woman capable of, who has lost her self-esteem ? It is in my principle to have but one lover, and to blush neither for him nor for my attachment. I am therefore both hurt and surprised at finding your letters full of invectives against the Count of M. I thought you had reflected upon the evils already produced by feelings of bitterness. If you render my situation still more irksome, merely because no more fears can be entertained respecting what I may do, I dare assert that there is little generosity in the proceeding. The step I have taken could only have proceeded from the profoundest esteem for the man who is the object of it, and from a fixed resolution to love him for ever. I have made him my idol. I never shall change. He has sacrificed every thing for me, and done every thing for me. I have learnt to know him too well to allow any assertion respecting him to make an impression upon me. I do not wish to sound his praises here, but I merely beg that his name may no longer be mentioned in our letters. Why is it wished to detach me from

him? Is it really imagined that I would return to M. Monnier—a man whom I have offended—to solicit a pardon I do not wish for, and exhibit a repentance I do not feel! No, it is a step which would degrade me in your eyes: it would be attributed to the weariness I experience in my prison,—to inconstancy, to interested motives—these shall never be my guides. I may be despoiled of every thing except my way of thinking and my feelings. I never will return under his roof, I solemnly declare; I should prefer dying a felon's death upon the scaffold *!"

In a letter from Sophie, wherein she speaks of one of her fellow prisoners, we find the following energetic expression of the same feeling—

“ Her husband has informed her that her prayers alone can soften him. She is consequently going to humble herself; to pray, to prostrate herself before him. Woman! Go, degrade thyself! Solicit thy return to a husband whom thou despisest! Give up thy friend, or rather thy lover! Thou canst still have valets! How vile are women, and how humiliated should I feel at belonging to that sex, if your love did not raise me in my own estimation †!”

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to her mother, Madame de Ruffey, dated June 19th 1777.

† Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated July 24th 1776.

In the following sentences, we find the same energy expressed in milder terms—

“ I should feel sorry if this letter again caused your displeasure—I am far from wishing it. But I know not how to dissemble: if I speak, it must be to say what I think. Do not take it amiss, and force me to deceive you, or to disguise my feelings*. I trust that time, whose aid you invoke, will prove to you that a woman who can sacrifice every thing, remains unchangeable ;—you will then restore to me your esteem †.”

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to Madame de Ruffey, dated July 24th 1776.

† Unpublished letter from Sophie to her mother, Madame de Ruffey, dated July 11th 1777.

BOOK VI.

MIRABEAU and Sophie left Verrières in Switzerland, for Holland, on the 17th of September 1776, arrived on the 26th at Rotterdam, and on the 7th of October at Amsterdam, where they lodged in the Calvestrand, at the house of a tailor named Lequesne.

Mirabeau's first care was to seek the means of subsistence. And yet it was stated in the pleadings at Pontarlier, repeated in the proceedings which took place in Provence, and again repeated more than twenty times, that the fugitives had carried off a considerable sum of money belonging to the Marquis of Monnier, together with jewels of great value. This monstrous imputation, which Mirabeau has never ceased to deny with the most indignant feelings of injured honour *, proceeded from the animosity, natural

* See the Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, especially vol. i. pp. 173, 404, 406. Second Case for the Count of Mirabeau against the Marquis of Monnier, p. 51—54. Observations on a Defamatory

enough, of Madame de Valdahon, the Marquis of Monnier's daughter formerly disinherited, and also from the

Libel entitled "Case and Counsel's Opinion for the Countess of Mirabeau," pp. 173—176; "Statement by the Count of Mirabeau," suppressed at the moment of its publication, &c., pp. 38, 41—43, 58. We also give some passages from three letters written a long time previously, by a person more hostile than favourable to Mirabeau.

"Do you not remark, among other numerous calumnies, the carrying off of a casket, which you yourself also believed *, and which is proved to be false by the proceedings, because the Marquis of Monnier ever complained of any such theft, even in the preliminary accusation."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 21st 1783.*

"I see by the law proceedings at Pontarlier that it is not true that your son's accomplice carried away any jewels or money. Do you imagine that a circumstance of this nature would have been forgotten in the accusation which contained so many ridiculous and frivolous charges?"—*Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 28th 1783.*

"I have questioned that woman's pilot, who assisted her in her escape; he asserts that she went away dressed in man's clothes and carrying nothing, not even a parcel in a handkerchief."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 11th 1783.* A few days after the Bailli wrote to his brother :—

"I told you that I have had here the servant who served as a guide to that foolish woman. I made him confess, just as a criminal judge would have done, warning him that I was going to question him as he would be questioned before the Court. I cross-examined the poor devil in such a way that he imagined he was

* The Marquis, with his usual precipitancy of impression, had spoken of spoliation. (Letter dated September 5th 1777, addressed to the Marquis of Marignane.)

correspondence of the Marquis of Mirabeau *. The real fact is, that the fugitives, when they fled, possessed but slender pecuniary means, which they had borrowed from a friend. The husband, represented as having been robbed, was perfectly well aware of the state of destitution they were in. Proof of this is contained in a letter from Sophie :—

“ M. de Monnier, knowing that I was at Amsterdam, destitute of pecuniary means, asked for my address only for the purpose of forwarding me some money. He sent his servant Sage to bring me some.”

Mirabeau was thus naturally obliged to draw his principal means from his literary labours, and this had perhaps been his motive for choosing Holland as his residence ; for at that period the Dutch booksellers entered largely into literary speculations. Immediately on his arrival, he went to the principal houses in the

really before a judge, and he gave me, though not without stammering, all the particulars. He asserts that the woman went away dressed as a man, and took nothing at all with her.”—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated April 11th 1783.*

Let us now hear Mirabeau himself, when addressing the principal instigator of his flight.

“ I now work for my livelihood, and can with difficulty earn it. This gives me at least a right to feel angry that people should think me enriched with the spoils of others.”—*Unpublished letter, dated Amsterdam, April 28th 1777, from Mirabeau to Brianson.*

* Case of the Countess of Mirabeau, p. 32.

trade. The following is the letter he wrote to one of them, named Mark Michel Rey.

“ A series of misfortunes, which it would be useless to relate to you, have forced me, Sir, to leave my country. It must be a matter of indifference to you to know who I am, how unrelenting my persecutors have been, or any other circumstance which, in a country less exposed than this to the impositions of needy adventurers, might claim the sympathy of a feeling man; but I have no doubt you will readily avail yourself of the opportunity of conferring an obligation upon a man of letters, if you find it your interest to do so, added to the satisfaction of performing an act of kindness. I am the author of the ‘ Essay on Despotism,’ a work which, though published some time since at Neufchatel, where it went through two editions in six weeks, has only begun very lately to be known in France, where it has caused too great a sensation for my tranquillity. This essay was composed in a hurried manner, without a plan, without order, and rather as the profession of faith of a citizen than as a literary composition. It may however give you an idea of the manner and style of a young man under seven-and-twenty. I am master of several languages. I work with facility, and am greatly desirous of obtaining employment.

“ Try then, Sir, if you can employ me in any way.

We will talk of pecuniary arrangements when you have seen what I am capable of undertaking. The only thing I would ask of you, in case it suits you to propose to me some literary work, is to procure me any books to which I may wish to refer. I beg of you to answer me with the same frankness that I make this application. I will send this evening for your reply."

" P. S. The ' Essay on Despotism ' is selling at present in France, at rather a high price. The typographical part of the work is very defective. If you think you could make a profitable speculation by another edition, I would improve and considerably increase it ; but that would take some time.

" If, at this moment you are inclined to publish a valuable edition of any work, I can venture to say that you would find few editors more accurate and laborious than I am *."

This first application, it would appear, was not successful, for we find that Mirabeau wrote again, a few days after, in the following terms :—

" When a man merely begs you to make a gratuitous trial of his labours, it would be difficult for you to become his *victim*. I was the first, however, to say that I was prepared for that mistrust with which the innumerable adventurers in this country cannot

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. M. Rey, Bookseller, dated October 22nd 1776.

fail to inspire your countrymen. Being little accustomed to make bargains, you shall be at liberty to fix the value of my labours when you have seen them, and not before. I send the 'Essay on Despotism.' It is a second and very defective edition. I almost gave my manuscript to M. Fauche, of Neufchatel; he gained by it two hundred louis. I did not then intend ever to fix a price upon works, which ought to be free as thought. Read the editor's notice, the dedicatory epistle, (a composition full of new and striking thoughts,) read from page 84 to page 112, (statement of principles), from page 151 to page 159, (portrait of Louis XIV), lastly, from page 174 to page 197, and from page 287 to the end. These two last parts (on fiscality and peroration) will give you an idea of my style, even when I take little pains in correcting it. Do you wish to ascertain whether I possess information? Read my discussion with M. Moreau, from page 257 to page 282, together with the notes at the end of the book. This, Sir, comprises the investigation which it is essential you should make. Were I to tell you that I am a man of quality, and shall one day possess an income of a hundred thousand francs a year, you would not believe me; and even if you gave credit to my assertion, it would not benefit you much. I could, however, furnish you with proof of it, through the French resident at Rotterdam, who knows me personally. But, after all, it must be of little consequence to you, and you must

have a better opinion of a man, who, under difficult circumstances, conceals himself, and devotes his time to labour, than of one who would use his name to make dupes, were it only for a short time. If you have any proposal to make to me, have the goodness to let me know at what hour I can speak to you this evening or to-morrow. I claim this from your politeness, and at the same time I request secrecy*."

We possess some particulars of Mirabeau's and Sophie's history during their stay in Amsterdam; but they are scarcely worth publication:—

Et quæ desperat tractata nitescere posse, relinquit.

Besides, the lovers were now together, and of course no letters passed between them. The situation they were in precluded their having much correspondence with any one, except indeed with Mirabeau's mother, who wrote several letters to them, and received a great number in reply, the originals of which are in our possession. As we are often deterred through delicacy and a detestation of scandal, from making use of all the documents in our hands, we do not much regret possessing so few, relative to this period, of which we should not take any further notice, even although we had a better knowledge of the events it embraces. We therefore confine our extracts to

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. M. Rey, dated October 24th 1776.

a few unpublished passages, to which the most scrupulous delicacy could not object, and some short fragments, already published, the whole referring to Mirabeau's stay in Holland.

Mirabeau, in order to conceal his name, had taken that of "Saint-Mathieu *."

"I waited more than three months before I could obtain any employment: for the calculating inhabitants of this country are more than backward in bestowing their confidence; and every bookseller has his own correspondents, whom he regularly employs. My conduct was such as to gain me some credit in a country entirely new to me, where I was quite unknown, where a man is esteemed only in proportion as he makes himself useful, and where a foreigner, unprovided with letters of introduction, is exposed to the greatest mistrust. At length I succeeded in earning a louis a day, by translations from the English, and other literary occupations; but I worked from six o'clock in the morning until nine at night."

Mirabeau obtained employment from Rey, the bookseller, with whom J. J. Rousseau had sometimes reason to be satisfied and sometimes the reverse, and of whom Mirabeau had great reason to complain, if we may judge from the following expressions by Sophie:—

"He (Rousseau) was not formed, any more than

* The name of a fief belonging to his mother, situated in Limousin.

yourself, to be connected with that rascally bookseller, Michel Rey."

Mirabeau was also employed by Changuyon, who "overwhelmed him with work *."

Notwithstanding Mirabeau's persevering efforts, he could scarcely supply the wants of his mysterious household, "in the dearest country in Europe not excepting London †." He now led, however, a tranquil and happy life.

"How unhappy would our existence have been in Amsterdam, had we been merely common lovers! How deeply would any other female have felt such privations! How cruel would such a penurious manner of living, which you supported so cheerfully, have appeared to any other! All my time was absorbed in study; and a man twice my age would have led a less sedentary life. But your affection bears this in remembrance. I was sometimes carried away by my vivacity and impatience, which might have appeared to you the effect of ill-temper; a kiss from you always dispelled the temporary gloom of my countenance, and restored quietude to my heart."

* In a letter written November 10th 1784 to Chamfort (Paris, Year V. p. 67.) it may be seen that Changuyon offered to employ Mirabeau, who endeavoured, by his own labour to remedy the utter destitution in which his father had left him.

† Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 406.

“ Yes, yes,” replied Sophie ; “ we were both of us so happy, so satisfied, so sure of each other’s affection ! Alas ! my Gabriel was not so happy as I was : his tender solicitude sought to avoid every thing that might give pain to his Sophie ; he thought but of consoling her, and drying her tears ! I have often caused yours to flow—you, for whom I would have given a thousand lives. But, you have forgiven me, you have said so ; repeat it over again and again. You fled from my eager embraces, fearful that they might make you forget your books ; and afterwards, with what joy did you receive them, with what happiness did I press you in my arms ! How often have you torn yourself from my love to pursue tedious occupations ! But nothing was tedious for you when Sophie’s welfare was at stake. Dearest Gabriel, you are indeed the model of true lovers.”

On the other hand, Mirabeau expressed himself thus :—

“ One hour devoted to music relieved me from my studious application ; and my adorable partner, who, although brought up in the lap of luxury, had never been in such good spirits, so courageous, so attentive, and so sweet-tempered as during our poverty, embellished my existence. Her unchanging sweetness of disposition, and her overflowing sensibility displayed themselves to the fullest extent. O my father ! we did not resemble

two insensate lovers, whom the blind passion of the moment had driven from their country; and indeed we were not such."

During Mirabeau's stay in Holland, he was frequently urged, even by his mother, to separate himself from Sophie, whom the Marquis of Monnier wished to return to him, promising to forgive and forget what had passed. Sophie, with her accustomed generosity, was about to make every possible sacrifice; and of this she, herself, gives her a proof:—

"Yes, my dearest mother, regulate every thing with your friends and advisers. I submit to every thing you may decide upon; for I am convinced you will not replace me under the dependence of M. de Monnier, a humiliation I must not, cannot, undergo. If the plan relative to the convent in Limousin could be adopted, I should prefer it, because it would bring me nearer to you *."

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to the Marchioness of Mirabeau, dated Amsterdam, February 25th 1777, two months and a half prior to the arrest. In other letters, dated April 13th and 14th and May 1st, this declaration is repeated. The expression "my dear mother" will be remarked. The Marchioness of Mirabeau had not only allowed it, but even requested it. This is another fact from which many others may be deduced; it also helps to explain, and, in some measure to excuse, Mirabeau's errors.

Independently of this appellation, this same letter contains another proof of the intimacy which had taken place between Mirabeau's mother and his mistress.

"The promise you are kind enough to make, of sending me your

It may easily be conceived that Mirabeau was indignant at the proposal. In vain did his mother press him to accede to it, reminding him of the steps he had taken in the month of January 1776, to obtain, from the Count of Saint-Germain, some employment in the army. We here give a single passage from one of Mirabeau's letters to his mother, in reply.

“Madame de Cabris must have informed you that it is impossible for me to enter the army. I am bound by sacred ties which nothing can dissolve in my heart and conscience. My conduct, and the interest you condescend to take in our affairs, must be based upon these considerations; for sooner would I become a common porter than fail in what I owe to her who has done every thing for me. It is not my generous mother who will condemn this resolution *, from which the most respectful, the most attached of sons, but at the same

portrait, fills me with joy. My portrait, which you are so good as to keep, will remind you of your promise.”

We shall, finally, remark, that the Marquis of Mirabeau treated her youngest daughter's lover as she did her eldest son's mistress. We learn this from the Marquis of Mirabeau.

“The mother, whilst in the convent, called Brianson her son-in-law.”—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated October 19th 1777.*

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated Amsterdam, October 19th 1776. See also, on this subject, a passage in the “*Letters from Vincennes*,” vol. i. p. 407, in which Mirabeau, who is writing to the Marquis, in the presence of a public officer, the statement of March 1st 1778, gives credit to his mother for her good advice, though it was of no avail.

time most obstinate of men, will never swerve, because he looks upon it as a sacred duty *."

We shall say nothing more of the laborious but happy life of the lovers, but close this account with the following touching comparison which Sophie wrote five years after.

" You will read in the last number of the *Mercury* † a little chivalrous history that will please you. You will be particularly delighted with Sabinus, that Roman who, during the reign of Vespasian, shut himself up in a subterranean cavern with his wife ‡. Their lives, spent far from human society which only destroys happiness, resembled ours at Amsterdam ; and yet how wide a

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated November 11th 1776. The Marchioness of Mirabeau has strongly insisted ; her son wrote her a few days after as follows :—

" Do you conceive it consistent with my honour, and my duty, to desert a woman who has done so much for me, and who, probably, did not act thus against my will? I will not debate with you respecting the preliminaries. Suppose I seduced her, and that I did wrong ; that I induced her to follow me, and again did wrong : it will still remain certain that the past no longer depends upon me. The question now is merely to know whether at the present time, which does depend upon me, I must, *in honour*, be guilty of the most odious perfidy? I am not lost ; but if I am fated so to be, I expect from you the advice that I must be honest above everything."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated November 21st 1776.*

† It was the number in which an account was given of the admission of Lemierre and the Count de Tressan to the French Academy.

‡ Eponina.

difference in other respects! They lived nine years in their place of concealment, we only spent nine months in ours. They had two children who lived, and our poor little girl is no more. They were arrested together as we were, but they died together, and fell by the same blow. Truly they were much happier than we*.”

Shortly after the departure of the two fugitives, the Marquis of Monnier discovered Mirabeau's place of retreat, through an act of heedlessness †. The husband;

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated February 8th 1781.

† Here are the particulars which we extract from one of Mirabeau's letters.

“A heedless act of mine contributed to furnish some information to the law harpies of Pontarlier. At a moment when I thought myself without resource, and was endeavouring to get some employment, I told a bookseller here that I was the author of the ‘Essay on Despotism.’ A few days after he informed me that he had been assured this work was the production of another person, whom he named to me. In order to make you comprehend this, I must tell you that I had been unable to avoid letting this bookseller know my name, because a person from Geneva, who knew me at Marseilles, met me at his house. The indignation naturally excited in the breast of an honest man, by the suspicion that he had advanced so dastardly a falsehood as to attribute to himself a work written by another, drew me into a very imprudent step. I instantly wrote to Fauche, bookseller at Neufchatel, who had published my work, begging him to inform the Dutch bookseller whether or not the Count of M. was the author of the work. I added that I was about to sail for England, &c.; Fauche sent me the certificate, but made many inquiries about me and immediately despatched my letter to the husband. Hereupon one of M. de Monnier's servants came and made inquiries. You know the rest.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated March 27th 1777.*

still enamoured of his wife, endeavoured to persuade her to return to him, and even sent a confidential servant to Holland for this purpose. Justly irritated at Sophie's obstinate refusal, he commenced proceedings*, and Mirabeau was informed of the circumstance through a lawyer of Pontarlier, M. Mauvaiset, who wrote to him as follows:—

“ Proceedings are going on. The decree for re-examination was passed with great publicity. Written proofs are wanting: there is only a note in your handwriting; it is of course attributed to you, as it bears a resemblance to the only document they possess as a means of comparison: your statement for Jeanret†. With regard to other evidence, the Swiss alone can appear against you, and some from Morges, Verrières, and perhaps other places have already been examined.

“ But what I cannot help informing you of, is, that the business, which may turn out very serious, could be settled by a compromise, or by a reconciliation between the husband and wife. This would prevent fatal consequences; it is perhaps still time to adopt it. M. de Monnier loved his wife, he still loves her, and

* This complaint, and an additional one, are inserted *verbatim* in the collection of documentary evidence published at the end of the “Second Case for Mirabeau, on the prosecution of the Marquis of Monnier,” &c., pp. 11. 14.

† See the “Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. iii. p. 29. vol. iv. pp. 223. 229. We shall have occasion to revert to this statement, and to the ungrateful individual for whom Mirabeau wrote it.

has but a short time to live*. I must say that what I see going on here makes me tremble; my fear increases on finding preliminary steps taken for a judgment by default, when I consider what judges are to decide upon your fate, when, in a word, I think of M. Monnier's influence in this town.

“The Count of Saint-Mauris is eager for your ruin. His memorials to the ministers have not been attended with the success he expected. He has just applied to the Procureur Général of our parliament, to whom it is said, he has sent a copy of his evidence accompanied with a fulminating letter.

“The Marquis of Monnier has a dower and conjugal right to gain†, and as this end is not to be attained without giving his wife an accomplice, he asserts that this accomplice is yourself. You are the guilty man they seek. If evidence is obtained, you will be

* Unpublished letter from Mauvasset to Mirabeau, dated March 1st 1777.

† It was rather Madame de Valdahon who would have reaped the pecuniary advantages of the condemnation, and who, above all, gained the advantage of securing her paternal fortune, the hope of which had been formerly destroyed, as well by a formal act disinheriting her, as by her father's second marriage. The Marquis of Monnier, indeed, did nothing of himself to bring about the condemnation: far from it, if Mirabeau is to be believed.

“The old husband wrote notes to every one who might think they had a right to arrest the fugitive wife, begging them to desist from every species of prosecution.”—*Second Case for Counsel's Opinion*, &c., p. 59, idem p. 100.

irretrievably ruined *.” “It is no secret that the Count of Saint-Mauris has written to the Procureur Général; the latter, and all the court have said so to every body; and his evidence, which occupied the commissary and the registering officer for five hours, proves the most deadly hatred †.”

This information was accompanied with particulars which it would be useless to transcribe, and at the same time with the most fearful anticipations, which the event very soon justified. On the 10th of May 1777, a judgment of the Bailiwick of Pontarlier, declared Mirabeau “charged and convicted of the crime of “forcible abduction and seduction;” condemning him “to be beheaded, which (so ran the sentence) shall be executed in effigy, upon a portrait ‡.” He was condemned moreover, to pay “a fine of five livres to the king, and to forty thousand livres civil compensation and damages to the Marquis of Monnier;” whose wife was condemned “to be confined, during her natural life, in the asylum established at Besançon, there to be shaved and degraded

* Unpublished letter from Mauvaiset to Mirabeau, dated March 25th 1777.

† Unpublished letter from Mauvaiset to Mirabeau, dated March 25th 1777.

‡ This was singularly interpreted by Peuchet, who says, vol. ii. p. 96, that the “portrait of the condemned was fastened to the scaffold.” Another pretended biographer, by way of variety, attributes the sentence to the Parliament of Besançon, which, he says, condemned Mirabeau “to be burned in effigy.”—*Little Universal Classical Biography*, &c. Paris, Gosselin, 1829, p. 2007.

like the females of that community." The sentence further stated, "that she had forfeited all her rights of community, dower, matrimonial gifts, and other advantages assured to her by her marriage settlement;" adjudging the marriage portion to the husband, and condemning the wife to pay a fine of ten louis to the king, &c. *."

We have recently explained how the place of concealment inhabited by the fugitives was discovered during the proceedings. They were aware of it, but relied with imprudent confidence, upon the persuasion that their legally elected domicile, preserved them from being delivered up†; and it appears that the suc-

* The enacting clause of this judgment is inserted at p. 9 of the documentary proofs printed at the end of the "Second Brief for Counsel's Opinion on Mirabeau's case;" at p. 11 is the procès verbal stating that the effigy mentioned in the judgment, being a painting, was attached to a scaffold erected on the Place des Casernes, of the town of Pontarlier, by Claude-Antoine Chrétien, the public executioner of the county of Burgundy.

† We have evidence of this fact in a letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to his brother, the Bailli, dated April 18th 1782.

"Nothing was easier than to follow them in Holland, where they had a lease signed with their real names, and deposited at the town hall, because they had been told that being thus domiciled, they were free from arrest."

Mirabeau wrote seven months after his arrest : —

"You will be surprised to see my procuration legalised by M. de Clairon (Consul of France). I have adopted this plan, because the privileges of Amsterdam are peculiar, and I have purchased the rights of an inhabitant of that city; these secure me from every species of surprise, because I cannot be arrested without being

cess of the persons in pursuit of them was principally owing to Inspector Brugnières, that police

summoned.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated October 23rd 1776.*

Two months later he spoke, without emotion, of the search that was making for him.

“A police officer has arrived here, who, I believe, has secretly made some inquiries: his labour will be in vain, and does not alarm me.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated Amsterdam, December 23rd 1776.*

“I have just been informed that there is a French officer here, commissioned to demand Sophie; I shall instantly call upon this doughty captain. Do not be under any apprehension—he will go as he came.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated March 17th 1777.*

“I know not what is become of this formidable negociator, whose attempts they wanted me to fear. I have been unable to discover him; but you may make yourself perfectly easy: I wish I were so respecting your health.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated March 27th 1777.*

See also, in the Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 160, the indignation of Mirabeau on finding how greatly he was deceived in his expectations.

“Is it in this country, formerly so free, so jealous of its liberty that our misfortunes have been consummated, that we have been arrested in open violation of the rights of nations, and of the laws and constitution of the country!”

Mirabeau probably learnt, at a subsequent period, that his arrest had been effected by surprise, and not for want of protection from the hospitable laws of Holland; for he praised them in the following terms:—

“No citizen can be arrested in his house, even for the most atrocious crime, unless the whole body of the magistracy proceed thither, and thus publicly attest that the accusation is real, and that the accused shall be legally acquitted or condemned. By what magic can such marvellous effects be produced? Through the aid

*roué**, who was doubly excited by the hope of gain, and by finding himself put upon his mettle, in consequence of the ill success of his first excursion. He offered his services, before Mirabeau and Sophie had been at Amsterdam six weeks, but his offer was at first declined.

“The other day I found Brugnieres here; he came as he said from M. Lenoir; he knew the locality,

of the law; by its constant, rigid, and inflexible execution. Every citizen knows in this happy country that he is as much a man as the first magistrate; he does not rely upon impunity, but he fears no oppression.”—*Lettres de Cachet*, vol. i. p. 226. This paragraph is preceded by unqualified praise of the Dutch police.—*Idem*, p. 223.

By the Marquis's letter, already cited, dated April 18th 1782, we learn that precautions were taken to prevent Mirabeau's adversaries from availing themselves, in the revision of the suit at Pontarlier, of the lease in question, as evidence of the lovers having resided at Amsterdam.

“I know that the Dutch Ambassador, who has withdrawn the lease and every trace of it, that Marshal Duras, Governor of the province (Franche-Comté), and the Prince of Bauffremont, and the whole of the country, who wrote in his favour, did not do it for his handsome person and good renown.”

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 9th 1777. A singular fact, which we have already stated in p. 20, is, that this same de Brugnieres, after having twice been employed in tracing Mirabeau, and having arrested him once, became his devoted and very useful agent at Vincennes. This fact, which is stated in the published letters, vol. i. p. 36 (preface), 46, 71, 198, 228, 246, 263, 267, vol. ii. p. 291, &c., is also proved by passages in the letters we possess. We do not, however, transcribe these passages here, because the matter is not of sufficient importance.

place of retreat, &c. I sent him back without further ado, saying that I had incurred so much expense, merely to prevent the misfortune of others, that it was now done with, and I could and would go no further. I admire how Providence has forced me to learn their vile cheats, and with what sort of people it makes me hold converse, in this fourth part of my life, having, during the three other parts, avoided rogues with such care! But I have enough of the past; I have been moulting for a long time. Those people wear out, corrode, and burn the very pavement they walk on. Even I do not escape the burning—I, whom they are dragging to the hospital by the hair and by the entrails*.”

But whilst the Marquis of Mirabeau pretended to be no longer desirous of pursuing his son, M. and Mde. de Ruffey were taking measures to have their daughter arrested. The Marquis soon made up his mind.

“It was thought that the gentleman had turned Turk, or was gone to be devoured by the Poles, and whichever of these two resolutions he might have adopted, would have elicited public applause. But he was in Holland, subsisting by his pen. As Brugnieres was to set out according to a bargain made with him by Madame de Ruffey, to carry off that silly

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 11th 1776.

creature, her daughter, and bring her to a certain place, for which he was to receive a hundred louis if he succeeded, and nothing if he failed, I availed myself of the opportunity, and made a similar bargain, also payable after the fellow had been taken to the place of his destination. I have had no tidings of him since. Are we again duped * ?”

They were not duped. As early as the 26th of March the Count of Vergennes offered orders to M. Lenoir, and sent them on the 19th of April †. On the 29th, the same minister invited the Duke of Lavauguyon, ambassador from France to Holland, “to assist M. Brugnières with advice, in regard to the steps he was pursuing to execute his commission, and to get leave of seizure ‡.” The Marquis of Mirabeau, being pleased with so much diligence, did not want to know the result, but wrote thus:—

“In former times I had no better tool than a coward; now it is impossible to be more obliged in detail than I feel myself to the prime minister. You saw how we were tossed about under Malesherbes, who nevertheless professed great esteem for me. The moment he was gone, things took quite another turn. Although

* Private letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 11th 1777.

† Letters written in the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. iv. p. 342 343.

‡ Private letter from the Count of Vergennes to M. Amelot, dated April 29th 1777.

ill or convalescent, and forced to write from this place (Noissy), I was immediately attended to, for every order I required, whether for France, or abroad *."

With this powerful support from government, success could not be long delayed.

"I learned yesterday that the wretch has been immured, and is in irons. You may judge how much help it has required, and how much trouble and expense it has occasioned, to have these people captured in a foreign country, where they had become naturalised †. The note received by M. Lenoir, and written by M. de Sartine, explains that the delinquents were arrested by order of the States General (of Holland) ‡. The brave Brugnieres has performed his mission like an old fox, like a most cunning trepanner; leaving me to emerge, like harlequin, as well as I can, with the help of money, which is the constant sauce to all the bones I have been obliged to swallow. The loss sustained by

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated May 26th 1777. It is manifest that the Marquis was satisfied with this administration; the former had displeased him as much.

"Malesherbes and his colleagues," said he, "put me in mind of those great gourds which have been hollowed out and a lighted candle put into them."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 16th 1781.*

† A particular circumstance serves to heighten the atrocity of this remark. Mirabeau was ill when taken into custody. See *Original Letters from Vincennes*, vol. ii. p. 9.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated May 31st 1777.

such commissions is dreadful, especially now that every strong box seems tied with a girdle of chastity; and it is all one whatever steps a man may take, for you know that these good people have a thousand means of fleecing you. They are, moreover, well backed by their superiors, who do not expect them to serve merely for the cross of Saint Louis*.”

The Marquis cherished another thought, which presented itself to his mind for the third time.

“ My wish would have been, had it been feasible, to deliver the wretch into the hands of the Dutch, and have him sent to their spice colonies, where he must have spent the remainder of his life, for there is no returning from them. If he were hanged there, it would be *incognito*; for after all the best of us is mortal;—and, if he survives us both, he has sense enough to keep himself out of a madhouse, and yet enough of folly and villany to disgrace the name he bears. I had even made interest among the High Mightiness who rule in India. The reply was that such a thing could be done only in the case of very young, and unmarried people, who were mere vagabonds. So I have shut him up, against the advice of every body, who continually urged me to let him take his own chance. My conscience, which I daily consult, whispered to me that independently of the innumerable sins he com-

* Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 9th 1777.

nits, his chance would be to be pummelled to death under our name; and it was not for such an end that our ancestors transmitted this name to us, with all its honours. Besides, he would soon retort upon me and mine, with all his power of intrigue, his fatal talents, his age, his morals, his profligacy, the money of his victims, and the support of his worthy confederates, in a city where the most disorderly and immoral deeds are freely forgiven. So that, with regard to him, and notwithstanding time, which unfortunately conceals and dissipates every thing, and the fools who assert that 'the king will not permit an imprisonment for life from family motives, when he scarcely ever does so from reasons of state,' my plan is absolutely formed, and none but the government and myself shall know his situation. When I die, a sealed note shall instruct my successor *."

We do not here insert any needless commentary, for this language is too plain, and suggests too many reflections, for the reader to require further assistance. But we must observe, that the Marquis of Mirabeau—

"Niggard in good, prodigal in evil,"

did not hesitate to encounter the "dreadful ruin"

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 21st 1777.

brought on by many law-suits, which elsewhere * he estimates at upwards of 20,000 francs, whereas, four years before, being able to pay his son's debts, instead of involving him in the discouragement and disgrace of an interdiction, and throwing him into a prison, where all his greater faults originated, he offered only 18,000 francs † to liquidate a sum, which at various times he

* Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated October 19th 1777.

"Although it cost me 20,000 francs to run after him, &c.; yet, when time has dried it, the riddance will not have been too highly paid."

Six weeks previously he wrote to the Marquis of Marignane:—

"His imprisonment has cost me 18,600 francs already."—*Letter dated October 5th 1777*, inserted in the "Brief and Counsel's Opinion in the Case of the Countess of Mirabeau, &c.;" J. Mouret, 1783, 162 pp. 4to.

† Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 311. Mirabeau had already written:—

"My father has been ridiculous enough to offer my creditors 18,000 francs, merely to be refused."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated October 19th 1776*.

This extraordinary fact would be too gross for belief were it only asserted in a simple letter, without any contradictory evidence. But it is placed beyond a doubt, by its appearing in a statement written in the Bailli's presence, and, in a manner, under the eye of the Marquis of Mirabeau.

"However it be, my father offered the Count of Grasse du Bar 18,000 francs to liquidate my debts. This sum could not liberate me. The remainder of my liabilities would have remained loaded with usury; and the payment of the interest alone would have devoured my income. What would have followed this part payment? I should still have been in the greatest difficulties,

estimated at 170,000*, at 200,000, and at 400,000 francs, and which did not really exceed 60 or 70,000, as Mirabeau constantly told him †, and as is proved in a letter written by a witness, and a stern opponent.

“ Let them say what they like, he (Mirabeau) must know, and so do we, that all his debts, taken at their real value, do not amount to 70,000 francs ‡.”

Let us insert, moreover, as a specimen of character, two passages in which the Marquis absolves himself, and glories in his cruel success.

“ When any wish of mine is not forbidden by my conscience, I have means in hand to gratify it. Depend upon it, that at Babylon, Antioch, and Paris, none but poor, pitiful fathers ever forgave contempt for their authority ; and, since there no longer exists any special court for family pleadings, we must chastise our children by means of the savage despotism of ‘ lettres de cachet,’ and not by the slow and tedious formality of blind and pedantic justice. When people used to praise me above measure, I only shrugged up my shoulders ; but now they attempt to cry me down,

and been driven to fresh expedients. My father would have said— ‘ I paid his debts once, and he has begun again.’ ”— *Observations on a Defamatory Libel, &c.*

* Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 326.

† Ibid., vol. i. p. 191—326 ; vol. ii. p. 33 ; vol. iii. p. 51.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 2nd 1778.

my internal feelings bear me up, and resist all their efforts to crush me. I know that I pass among them for the Nero of the age; that the women reserve for me the fate of Orpheus, and the lawyers that of Romulus. But what matters it? If I were sensitive I should have died long ago. Let them vainly strive to rend the cuirass of honour which overspreads me, and is now too hard and too sound to give way under their feeble blows. The public are not my arbiters. I trample upon their stupid decrees, emitted by affected passions, and though I respect my sovereign and the law, I fear nothing but my own conscience. So long as my health and spirits last, I will play the part of Rhadamanthus, if it please God. Thus I face about to meet them, for if I once turn my back, they will be sure to make a desperate onset.

“ But to come to the point. I wanted to gain my cause, and I have gained it. I wanted to shut up these two mad fools, and they are shut up *. I wanted to immure this wild rascal of mine, and he is immured. As for the barking of the Course †, it will not last a week. However, I presume it is neither in your presence, nor in your hearing, that people talk of your

* His wife and younger daughter, Madame de Cabris, were kept prisoners at the Convent of the Dames de Sisteron, from the 14th of February 1778, to the 10th of June 1781.

† The principal public walk at Aix, where the Bailli of Mirabeau used to spend the winter.

family affairs. Four days ago I fell in with Monpezat, whom I had not seen for twenty years, and whose stupidity drew upon him the following smart repartee:—

“ ‘ Is your suit with the Marchioness at an end ? ’
said he.

“ ‘ I have won it, Sir.’

“ ‘ And where is she now ?’

“ ‘ In a convent.’

“ ‘ And your son, where is he ?’

“ ‘ In a convent.’

“ ‘ And your daughter * ?’

“ ‘ In a convent.’

“ ‘ Have you taken upon yourself then to people convents ?’

“ ‘ Yes, Sir, and if you were a son of mine, you should have entered one long ago †.’ ”

After reading this singular dialogue, we cannot help calling to mind an expression as bitter as it was true, which, about the same time, was addressed by Mirabeau to his father.

“ You have brought up all your children, but one ‡, under the influence of fear, as if their veins had been filled with the blood of slaves §.”

* Madame de Cabris.

† Private letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 26th 1778.

‡ Madame du Saillant.

§ Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. ii. p. 197.

We must not forget that the Marquis of Mirabeau, so despotic in his own family, still gave himself out as the "Friend of Men," and proclaimed his feelings, which were really sincere. Here is a proof of his sincerity. It occurred within a week or two of the events just related.

He had gone to drink the spa waters of Mont d'Or, whence he wrote thus :—

"When you say that the Mont d'Or was formerly another fountain of youth for me, I am led to believe that you have not closely examined it.

" 'There are,' says the miller, 'no more calves at my age.' I could say much worse, if I durst say all. At all events, in spite of my great aversion to play the frog, especially at these baths, which resemble those of Dante, here I am; and, moreover, without feeling any pain or sickness, drinking with benefit, and exercising myself on the only platform in this part of the country, a walk which I formerly laid out * myself, which bears my name, for which the disabled praised me, and which these savages have half destroyed. Oh! Madam, what fine stories I could tell you, if I had not twenty letters to answer, on sad business! I would give you a description of the native festival of the place, which took place on the 14th. The savages came down in

* Letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Countess of Rochefort, dated August 18th 1777.

large bands from the hills, and all our people were ordered to stay at home. The priest in his surplice and stole; the justice with his wig; the horse patrol with their swords drawn, keeping the ground, before the bagpipes were allowed to play; the dance, after lasting half an hour, giving way to a grand fight; the cries and shrieks of the children, invalids, and others encouraging the combatants as the mob do fighting-dogs; these frightful men, more like wild beasts, clad in coarse woollen coats, with large leather bands, studded with brass nails, their lofty stature being still more raised by their thick wooden shoes, standing too on tiptoe to look at the fight, beating time with their feet, rubbing their sides with their elbows; such ghastly faces, covered with long greasy hair; the top of the face turning pale, whilst the bottom was distorted into a savage grin, showing a kind of fierce impatience;—yet these people pay tallage, and are to be deprived of salt! Ministers do not know whom they plunder, whom they think to rule; whom, with the scribbling of their dull, unmeaning pens, they hope to starve with impunity till the catastrophe comes. Exhibitions like these recall some fine thoughts! ‘Poor Jean Jacques!’ said I to myself, ‘the man who could have sent you and your system to copy music among such people, would have made a harsh reply to your discourse.’ On the other hand, these thoughts were consolatory to a man who has dedicated his whole life to preach the cause of the

poor, and the urgency of general education ; and at the same time has pointed out what species of instruction must be given, to constitute the only barrier between oppression and revolution, the only infallible treaty of peace which can endure between might and weakness. Ah ! Madam, if this game of blind man's buff lasts much longer, there will be a general upset *."

Return we now to Mirabeau and Sophie. They were arrested at Amsterdam on the 14th of May 1777, by Inspector Brugnières *. Biographers, often careless,

* Cadet Gassicourt says, in the second edition of his Notice, p. 13, "To resist tyranny, and face it boldly, was always the first thought of Mirabeau. Some one had informed him that a certain Brugnières, who frequented the same tavern, was a police agent, sent to arrest him. Instead of hiding himself, or making off, he went up to the table where the officer was sitting, and took a seat there with a lofty look."

This anecdote is true ; and here follows Mirabeau's own version of it :—

"I have only a moment left, my dear mother, to relate to you a most singular incident. M. Brugnières has arrived, and I had instant intimation of the circumstance. It so happened that he was lodging at the same tavern as the Counts of Luigné and Quelen, who, you most likely know, have left France for America, to join the insurgents. I went to sup at this tavern on purpose to see this Brugnières. Luigné, and Quelen recognised me there, but I gave them a hint, and they began the attack by very clear though indirect innuendoes. Brugnières was dull enough to incite them openly by taking their allusions to himself, denying, however, both his profession and his name. I think they would have felled him to the ground without my interference ; as it was, they kicked him out of the tavern. This man was recommended to a merchant of this city, who has

and sometimes misinformed, have stated that these orders related only to Sophie, and not to her lover, who was at liberty to stay in Holland. But that the contrary is the fact, we have proved by the extracts just given.

We possess, in truth, no other account of this arrest, but Mirabeau's :—

“ The government applied for our arrest, and I was informed of it ; a thousand ties detained me ; a silly bashfulness induced me not to speak to my friends, for I had made some, until it was too late. They advised me instantly to rid myself of some debts ; but the time was past.

On the day of my arrest, I received three different intimations from people in office, that I should be taken the next day. Fatal mistake ! I must not charge it to them as an act of treason ; they were compelled to act. The French consul came and offered me money, a passport, and even absolute freedom, if I would give

espoused his quarrel, and whom we have not spared ; yet the rogue has friends and influence enough to give me some uneasiness.”—*Private letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated May 1st 1777.*

“ M. Bruguères, after having been expelled from two or three taverns, is still here ; and, it is said, with orders to carry off Sophie. The military reception he met from us, and the consequences which might ensue, have perplexed me not a little, and I have taken fit measures to obviate them. What else ought I to do ?—wait till the bomb-shell falls, and bury it ?”—*Letter from the same to the same, dated May 5th 1777.*

up Madame de Monnier*. They all kept out of her sight. Alas! had she known it, I should have had other prayers to reject. That very night we had fixed upon for our flight. This heroine, so loving, so brave and so good, was calm and serene; but would not go out before me. Only one minute more would have saved her. I had already left the house; a friend was to have escorted her by another way, for we were afraid to appear together. I heard that she was arrested. Just heaven! Sophia arrested! I hesitated not a moment what to do: it was my duty, with the feelings and principles I professed, to be both happy and miserable as her fate might be. I surrendered myself to the wretch who had orders to bring me back 'alive or dead †.' Had my principles been equally ferocious, he might have wept over his-victory ‡."

It has been published §, that Sophie, at the moment of her arrest, attempted to take poison. This fact

* From what has preceded, it is evident that this offer could only have been suggested by the party himself, and from personal regard, since the order of arrest extended to Mirabeau as well as to Sophie.

† We have previously shown that this inhuman alternative was never uttered; there must therefore be either error or exaggeration in this passage.

‡ Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 408.

§ Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. See the Preliminary Discourse, p. 25; Peuchet, vol. i. p. 234; Cadet Gassicourt, p. 18 in the first edition, and 14 in the second; Chaussard, p. 38, edit. 1797, &c.

is proved beyond a doubt by the assertion of Mirabeau himself:—

“ When Madame de Monnier was arrested at Amsterdam, the thought of leaving me brought on a fit of the darkest despondency. She resolved to put an end to her life, and wrote to me by an indirect channel, stating that she would do so. My head and heart, which were as troubled as her own, had inspired me with the same project; but there was a warning voice that told me she was pregnant. I therefore informed M. Brugnères of her intention. He very prudently exerted himself to win Madame de Monnier’s confidence, and restore her in some degree to tranquillity. He thought that the best, if not the only way to bring this about, was to make use of me in so difficult a task. He took charge of our open letters; and promised Madame de Monnier an interview with me, on condition that she gave him the opium she carried about her. This proceeding had the desired effect. I had no difficulty in reminding this affectionate and feeling woman, of her duty to her child. She promised not to pursue her project; but at the same time swore that after a certain time, if she had neither means nor hopes of hearing from, or writing to me, she would find a sure way to escape from slavery and grief *.

* Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 283. An allusion is made to this dreadful purpose in the following pas-

We have likewise, a great number of other proofs which establish Sophie's intention of committing the rash act, by which, twelve years after, she ended her days. We shall have occasion to speak of it by and by when the order of dates obliges us to dwell a little on this catastrophe, for the purpose of refuting those writers

sages from two letters written by Sophie to Mirabeau. In the first she expresses her grief at not having received any letter from him.

"By leaving us in ignorance of each other's fate, do they want to remind us of the period we have fixed upon to end our woes?"—*Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated June 21st 1777.*

In the second she gives Mirabeau an account of the arrangements made preparatory to the judgment by default. She also states what was said by a female servant.

"She affirms that on seeing you hesitate to depart, I told you that if you did not go, or if they arrested me, I was determined to swallow the contents of a small packet which I showed you, containing poison; that you asked me to give you up this packet, and I refused."—*Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated June 10th 1780.*

In the same letter, written seventeen days after the death of their child, she says:—

"O my treasure! our child has no more need of us! If this wean you from life, if existence become hateful, only say so—I am ready!"

We might mention other letters, one, for instance, dated July 24th 1777, from which we shall presently borrow a fragment. Among the numerous proofs which present themselves, we find the following passage in the "Correspondence from Vincennes:"—

"Take heed how you injure both love and nature, by the crime of despair; for, during your passionate fits of tenderness, you have often sworn not to survive me. Were you then a mother? No, you were not."—*Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. iv. p. 300.*

who have been unjust enough to make Mirabeau the immediate cause of the event.

It has also been said*, that Mirabeau basely attempted to escape, whilst Brugnières was laying hands on Sophie—an odious falsehood, which the account just given would have refuted, had not Sophie herself denied it before.

“Alas! it was in my sight, it was when thou wert with me that they took thee. The danger lay near Sophie; for had you fled, there was none for you. But your delicate sensibility would not let you fly, and forsake a friend, whom you could no longer assist. Ah! there needed not this new tie to bind Sophie to her Gabriel †.”

It appears that Brugnières had received instructions to conduct his fair prisoner to Sainte Pélagie, a receptacle for women of corrupt morals and lost reputation. Sophie knew this, and spoke vehemently on the subject, as we may see by the following sentence:—

“It is a place in which your beloved must necessarily have died ‡.”

The agent of police who, in this instance, evinced both good sense and good feeling, wrote on the 24th

* In a pamphlet, entitled “Reflections on the Denunciation of Stock-jobbing.” Paris, 1788.

† Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated July 23rd 1777.

‡ Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated June 10th 1777.

of May, from Amsterdam, to M. Lenoir, to propose another place of confinement, urging the disconsolate state of his captive, her high birth, and the rank of her husband, who was not aware of the orders which had been given *. On the same day the ambassador Duke of Lavauguyon wrote —

“ I cannot refrain from appealing to your sensibility with regard to the grievous situation of Madame de Mounier; a young woman, whom a violent passion has hurried away and spell-bound, but who seems conscious of all her errors † .”

This nobleman had before given her proofs of sympathy, which we mention merely to corroborate what we have said respecting the conduct of the two fugitives whilst in Holland.

“ The Duke of Lavauguyon,” said Sophie, “ who came to visit me in prison at Amsterdam, would not, with the rank he held, have taken notice of a woman unworthy of regard. He can tell you what my conduct was in Holland; so can the French Consuls and Agents at Amsterdam and Rotterdam, who knew us both ‡ .”

“ Sophie,” replied Madame de Ruffey to her, “ do not deceive yourself. If the Duke of Lavauguyon paid

* Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. iv. p. 345.

† Idem, p. 348.

‡ Unpublished letter from Sophie to Madame de Ruffey, dated June 19th 1777.

visits to both of you, in Holland, it was only from respect for the husband of the one, and the father of the other*. This visit might likewise have been prompted by curiosity to see a heroine of romance†.”

* This last assumption is erroneous.

“They say that the French minister, at the Hague, has received orders to keep his eye upon me. And here I may observe, that the Duke of Lavauguyon is our present ambassador, and is daily expected. Formerly, when Duke of Saint-Mégrin, he had some differences with my father; after having proclaimed himself my father's disciple and friend, he not only forsook, but ridiculed him. See whether you can make any use of him for me, by means of letters of recommendation, or in any other way.”— *Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his mother, dated October 23rd 1776.*

We know for certain that the Duke of Saint Mégrin had been connected with the political economists.

“I have to announce to you the visit of an illustrious young nobleman, who will do me the honour to look at my estate on his way to Provence. This letter will be delivered to you by the young Duke of Saint Mégrin, an excellent person, author of the ‘Letters to the Abbé Mably,’ which you read in the last volumes of the ‘Ephémérides.’”— *Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 3rd 1768.*

The Duke of Saint Mégrin was son of the Duke of Lavauguyon, governor of the grandchildren of Louis XV. His father had instructed him to treat with the Economists relative to the dedication of the “Ephémérides;” the rejection of this dedication was chiefly owing, as we have already noticed (in the first volume of this work), to the ungovernable pride of birth and of sect shown by the Marquis of Mirabeau. It is therefore easy to conceive that a rupture, or at least a coolness, might have ensued; and that the Duke of Saint Mégrin, as a man and a courtier, was likely to lay hold of so fair an opportunity to ridicule the haughty leader of the Economists.

† Unpublished letter from Madame de Ruffey to Sophie, dated July 22nd 1777.

Sophie persisted. "He must be romantic indeed then, for he showed towards the 'hero and heroine of romance,' the most tender concern, offered them his own recommendation, for want of a better, and mingled his tears with theirs*."

On Sophie's arrival at Paris, she was placed in the establishment of M^{lle} Douay, who kept a sort of house of correction in the Rue de Charonne. Her assumed name of Madame de Courvière† was entered there.

"As every body here bears none but her Christian name, I am called Sophie, a name you have taught me to love so fondly‡."

Besides the tortures inflicted upon this young woman, whose guilt was not equal to her misery, the most vexatious restraint was imposed upon her in an abode which prepared her for a prison.

"Here we are quite close to Ménilmontant. I can see it from my window. But no one enjoys a prospect here; the house is dreadful§. There are as many as seven persons in one room, and four in mine. I cannot write except in my bed with the curtains drawn||. So

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to Madame de Ruffey, dated July 30th 1777.

† The name of an estate belonging to the Marquis of Monnier.

‡ Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated June 10th 1777.

§ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 13th 1777.

|| Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated July 9th 1777.

that if we had been able to foresee these difficulties, we might have laid in a stock of paper, and pens and ink. Never use tobacco instead of ink, rather use Indian ink; that is what I employ. You may likewise put nails into vinegar; they rust and make a yellow ink*.”

Whatever may have been the anguish of her mind, in prison, Sophie endured it without murmuring, in the hope of hearing from Mirabeau.

“ M. Lenoir is so kind, so humane! he tells me to trust to him; but he must assist us both! Were he willing to serve none but me, I should reject his offers. Ah! 'tis the kindness shown to my Gabriel that affects me†!”

“ I live but in expectation of your letters. Every day I see means of escaping. Fastenings always relax in course of time; the garden walls are not higher than those I once leaped from; but, if flight were ever so easy, if every door were open, I would not go out. Alas! I should not be able to fly to your dungeon! And without you whither could I go?—where should I be surer of receiving your letters than here? Let them but reach me, and I shall not repine even in captivity! I could even kiss my fetters at such a price‡!”

* Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 13th 1777.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 19th 1777.

‡ Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated July 6th 1777.

Before we conclude the present book, we must endeavour to atone to our readers for the blanks we have been obliged to leave unfilled, as regards the events and correspondence belonging to the time which the fugitives spent in Holland.

Several passages in the collection from Vincennes*, the prefaces to two works published by Mirabeau in 1784 and 1788†, and a number of letters in our possession, make it manifest that, at Amsterdam, at Rotterdam, at Leyden, and at Dordrecht, he had become intimate, not only with the savans and literati, but also with many citizens, whose taste led them to study politics, and to active philanthropic speculations.

In France, Mirabeau had been received at an early age into the brotherhood of Freemasons. This circumstance had enabled him to visit a Dutch lodge; and it appears that, either spontaneously, or in compliance with a request, he intended to propose an establishment of which we have the plan, written not in his own hand-writing, for he left but a few unconnected autograph notes on the subject, but in that of an amanuensis employed by him for several years, and who probably copied the original manuscript.

This production bears evidence of having been written by Mirabeau. It contains his opinions, his

* See, among others, p. 222, vol. iv.

† Doubts on the Freedom of the Scheldt, and the Address to the Batavians.

principles, and his very style, which is the more easily recognised, because he never sought to disguise or vary it. This is not, we admit, a work of deep reflection, or superior merit. But we think that others will see in it as we do, the most noble and benevolent intentions, and just principles; and will admit that gratitude is due to the writer, a fugitive, and a wanderer, for the voluntary penance which made him devote himself to the good of all, as an indemnity for the injury he had done to a few. This production will also be viewed with a mixture of wonder and concern, as a fresh proof of the talents and generosity of a man, made up of good and evil passions, who sought in the meditations of philanthropy, a little relaxation from domestic anxiety, remorse, and imminent danger. We therefore give it a place here.

PLAN

OF AN INTIMATE ASSOCIATION TO BE ESTABLISHED IN THE ORDER OF FREEMASONRY, WITH A VIEW TO RESTORE THAT ORDER TO ITS GENUINE PRINCIPLES, AND MAKE IT TEND EFFECTUALLY TO THE GOOD OF MANKIND: DRAWN UP, IN 1776, BY B. MI——, NOW SURNAMED ARCESILAUS.

Preamble.

“Those who without insight into the principles of the order of Freemasons, and without enthusiasm, enter that brotherhood, from mere curiosity, or from

motives of interest, are generally but little satisfied, and often forsake it, unless the charms of society, or other considerations, induce them to remain. But how widely different must those men think who, after deep reflection, discover the usefulness, the greatness, and the respectability of one universal bond, the ramifications of which, extending to every land, have linked together a great number of enlightened people, most of them of superior birth, fortune, and education, in an institution whose object is to direct all minds to the knowledge of nature's universal creator, to the primitive connection of fraternity and equality which exists among all men, and to the consequent duty of succouring one another, and labouring for the welfare of the whole human race—a duty constantly acknowledged by religion, and by all our discourses and actions.

“ Such as are sensible of all this ought not to heed a few unpleasant blemishes. Though they may grieve to witness the little use that has been made of means so sublime, so noble, and so admirable, they ought, nevertheless, to endeavour at least to maintain this institution, to the utmost of their power ; so that, if it be not their happy lot to see the day when it shall produce all the fruits expected from it, future generations, at least, may be enabled to work out for the general good of mankind the valuable means which it affords.

“ Thus, how little conformable soever a brother may

find the actual state, either of the whole order, or of his particular lodge, to the notions which his private information has enabled him to form of the use of the O., and its possible results, still it is his duty neither to abandon it himself, nor to dissuade candidates from becoming members. If it prove that, in some places, nothing more is done than a little charity to the poor—if in other places what is done has no effect on human welfare—and if even, as is often the case, immaterial things are effected by great powers, which might have been applied to purposes infinitely more beneficial and determinate, had they not been checked by ignorance, narrowness of mind, short-sightedness and personal interest:—still he should not murmur, but comfort himself by saying, that this charity towards the B. is of itself something noble, and worthy of respect; that the little which is done for mankind, though frequently misapplied, is always interesting, and worthy of admiration; that it is an important example of what the O. might do if it were to exert itself, and of what it will do when knowledge and philanthropy, its natural consequences, have become more diffused; but that all this good would be suspended and could not go on, if erroneous notions and culpable impatience led the choicest spirits to forsake the order, and gradually to occasion its dissolution. It is only by keeping alive the enthusiasm of the B., and binding them still more

closely together, that the great object of the institution can be effected.

If the heart of a B. is capable of "love for his neighbour," if he is not infected with that social pestilence, that cold spirit of selfishness, which, as it considers nothing but the present moment, is entirely foreign to every real emotion of the heart, whether for virtue, or for fame, these ideas will bind him to the O., make him espouse all its interests, and induce him to perpetuate its true principles and uses, by inculcating them in the most persuasive manner to others, especially to new B., as well by language as by example. These opinions and feelings will prompt him to overlook the little defects he may perceive in every lodge, owing to the foolish measures adopted every day from want of knowledge, generosity, wisdom, and virtue among most of the brotherhood.

The frivolity, and folly of the Athenians did not prevent Demosthenes, Phocion and other celebrated citizens belonging to that republic, from continuing to serve it till their deaths. Such were the ideas of the greatest men of former ages, with regard to their country; such, too, should be the ideas of an enlightened B. with regard to the O.

Nevertheless, the human intellect is becoming more and more enlightened, and man, so long pent up within the limits of sordid selfishness, by the despotic

power of governments, now begins to entertain more extensive views and feelings, and to watch more carefully over the common interests of his race. All this is due to the intolerable burden of the very power which had deteriorated the springs of their minds. The time is come for the most enlightened and high-minded B. to collect their strength, and turn the O. by degrees towards that goal which it may reach, and thereby become able to contribute with full efficiency, when opportunities offer, to the happiness of all, including even those who are not B. For such a purpose it would be proper to form an association of the most virtuous, humane, and enlightened B., taking for its groundwork the following principles :—

Principles of the intimate Association of B.

1st. The object of this institution is to labour most effectually to the one object of the order of Freemasonry : THE GOOD OF ALL MANKIND.

To effect this object, we must rightly understand the means of its attainment.

First: the happiness of each individual depends upon the degree of wisdom and virtue which the Supreme Being has conferred upon him. No society can compel any man to be wise and virtuous : such a project would be chimerical. But we may bring the means of acquiring wisdom and virtue within the reach of many men ; this

is a result which human society should pursue eternally, for, by dint of perseverance, it may be obtained.

“Such is the nature of wisdom and virtue, that to make a profession of them is advantageous to those who possess them. If many think otherwise, it is because they have not sense enough to see this truth, or because having at the outset imbibed false notions, they are become incorrigible, and it will remain hidden from their view.

The proper way, therefore, to make men wise and virtuous, is first to enlighten them; and this should be done more especially when they are young.

The primary basis of the exertions of this institution, one of the great principles upon which its rules should be founded, is a resolution to extend to the utmost the circle of knowledge, not so much in depth as in surface.

I explain myself:—

The labours and exertions of this institution should not be employed in scientific research. For the rewards which hardly ever fail to attend discoveries in science are sufficient to engage the pursuit of men of learning.

Nevertheless, if the members of the institution either individually or collectively, can, without detriment to more important matters, give encouragement to useful discoveries, they may do so without swerving from the spirit of the O.

Their main object should be to diffuse among the people those facts and that useful knowledge already revealed to many privileged persons. This would prove the most effectual means of enlightening and improving the human race.

To defective education must be attributed the ignorance of people of all conditions, except a few master spirits, and those to whom literature is a profession. Ignorance lures many into vice, and many more into a course of dissipation, always attended with aberration of intellect, whereby they become incapable for ever of thinking, or of following any useful employment.

This irrational education induces a hatred of science, makes its acquirement almost impossible, and prevents nine hundred and ninety nine people in a thousand, from addicting themselves to reading, the habit of which generates that of thinking, and by arming the mind against the tedium of life, preserves us from a thousand vices and misfortunes.

Means must therefore be found to amend the system. The institution should therefore undertake to examine and encourage every new discovery pertaining to the subject, and to practise and cause to be practised all those which sound reason, joined to experience, may show to be well adapted for the diffusion, more beneficially than heretofore, of true and useful knowledge, and for facilitating its acquirement to all men.

Thus, the introduction of reason, good sense, and

sound philosophy into the education of every class of men, is the primary object of this society.

Let us come to the second point.—If we imagine a race of men endowed with all the wisdom and virtue which can spring from a good education, we shall see that this is not enough to make them happy. A very wise, and very virtuous man would be very wretched, if he had either the gout or the stone. He would not suffer so much as a maniac or a vicious man with the same complaints; but he would be wretched notwithstanding.

It is true that the projected society could never undertake to set bounds to the physical effects which the maker of all things has mixed up with the composition of his work, and which often affect particular persons.

But there are many other obstacles to the happiness which men might enjoy, and these obstacles all proceed from government and legislation. For instance, can it be supposed, that the wisest and most exemplary man can be otherwise than very unfortunate, when he has been torn from his parents, his wife, his children, or his mistress, and sent to be butchered in America *?—when he is a serf bound for ever to the soil, himself and his children with him?—when instead of being able

* This is evidently an allusion to the Hessians, six thousand of whom the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, Frederick II, sold to the English to go and fight against the rebels of North America. This expedition suggested to Mirabeau the idea of the "Advice to the Hessians," a work written in Holland, and of which we shall give an account in Book XIV.

to work to support himself, his family and his cattle, he is liable to average or feudal labour; or when he desires to practise some art which he has studied, and to marry the woman of his affections, but is prevented from doing so, because either he has not money enough to take out a licence from his corporation, or it absorbs his last penny, which ought to be laid out to improve his condition?—or when the smallest pretence shall suffice to have him immured in a prison or put to the rack? In a word, is it possible for a wise and virtuous man to be happy, if he is liable to oppression, exile, imprisonment, and death itself, at the pleasure of any powerful fellow-creature whom he may have displeased?

Thus we have shown that despotism and its results constitute one of the great scourges of humanity. The second great object of the present institution is the correction of the actual system of law and government.

This correction may be special or general, gradual or sudden, secret or open.

This latter species should not enter into the spirit of this institution, because it is contrary to the statutes of the O., and even dangerous to humanity. Ambitious men take advantage of troubled times, to cast another net oftentimes more closely woven, to impose upon mankind another yoke frequently more heavy, and to hurry those who had wished only to remedy present evils, into an opposite abyss.

See Cromwell, see the reigning king of Sweden, who

has urged on his adherents far beyond the limits to which they intended to go.

But this institution will be perfectly able to attempt a gradual improvement in law and government. Such a project is not chimerical. It may, however, be easily understood, that this last and sublime part of the brotherhood's labours ought to be kept secret, and disclosed only to confidential persons. The result would be immense, worthy of all the attention of the O., and worthy of itself.

If any one persisted in asserting that the execution was impossible, to him I would reply that patience, perseverance, and secrecy render every thing possible.

If any member of the institution possesses influence in public affairs, or is even able to urge on those who do possess such influence, he will exert himself to destroy one of the fetters that galls human nature in any particular country or place ; another will do the same elsewhere, and thus by degrees, with prudence and good-sense, despotism will find itself circumscribed within the limits of reason and of law.

I will here cite as an instance, a recent and striking example of what a body firmly united and guided by wisdom can achieve ; and though this instance is taken from an atrocious institution, it may at least serve to prove the power of time and prudence.

I allude to the institution of the Jesuits. What has it not achieved ? The object of the Jesuits was un-

doubtedly to make a burnt offering of the liberty of mankind upon the altar of superstition and despotism, and afterwards to make the two latter minister to their own ambition. They wanted to brutalise the human species and then govern it. Our views are entirely the reverse : they tend to enlighten mankind, to render it free and happy. But we must and ought to attain our end by the same means, and what should prevent us from operating in good what the Jesuits did in evil.

Besides we possess infinite advantages over them. We have no dress, no external rite to distinguish us, no visible chief invested with the power of dissolving our association. At every storm which might threaten us, we could dive and reappear at other times and in other places. We have no interested or ambitious views that might give umbrage. If, with these means, a judicious choice is made in the admission of members, and in the care taken to form them, and instil into them the principles of our association, it is impossible not to succeed. Pythagoras and his disciples formed in that part of Italy called Magna Græcia, an almost similar society. We respect, and justly so, this illustrious B. M. and he may serve as our model.

Having thus stated the principles of this institution, I will hazard a sketch of a few regulations which naturally arise from it, entreating the B. who read them to add their own observations.

REGULATIONS FOR THE PROPOSED ASSOCIATION.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL REGULATIONS.

I. This association shall be entirely engrafted upon that of the order of Free-masons, and therefore intimately connected with it ; and none shall become a member of the former, until he has been admitted into the latter.

II. The admission to this institution shall take place with the same description of ceremonies as those observed in the other degrees of the O. The form of admission shall be in unison with the object of the institution, and the rites shall be determined by those brothers who first accede to the plan. These rites when once fixed shall never be changed except by general consent.

III. There shall be two principal degrees. In the first, the initiated shall be informed of the true object of the whole order, THE GOOD OF HUMANITY, and the intention of efficaciously labouring for its attainment. The general system of the association shall be explained, and one of its objects, namely— the intention of reforming and extending the education of mankind, and of protecting with united force every thing that shall tend thereto.

In the second degree, to which none shall be admitted who have not given evident proofs of zeal in pursuit of good, the second object shall be explained, namely—the correcting of law and governments, and the establishment of an equitable liberty among men.

IV. As all the members must be B. M., they must be zealous in that order, not only because it is an excellent school of public spirit, but also in order to acquire the masonic dignities of their lodge, and make the strength of the latter concur, unknown to its general members, in the views of the association, which are also those of the Free-masons. The masonic lodges having at their head members of this association, shall be termed enlightened lodges.

V. The association shall be divided into provinces, after the model of the order, and there shall be a capital in each state, but without possessing any authority. The great undertakings which require a general co-operation of force, shall be decided upon by the majority of votes, first in each lodge of the association, and afterwards in the lodges united. Out of lodge, each member, individually, or several voluntarily united, shall labour to forward the views of the institution among their friends, always giving an account of their proceedings at the metropolitan lodge, which shall inform the other lodges of the same.

CHAPTER II.

QUALIFICATION OF CANDIDATES FOR ADMISSION.

I. It must be a fundamental rule never to allow any sovereign prince whatever to enter the society, were he an angel in virtue. If monarchs were not absolutely excluded, they would infallibly spoil the institution, in the same manner they have spoiled Freemasonry. But noblemen, provided they have become superior to the prejudices generally attributed to that class, would be valuable members of this association, because the point of honour which binds them to their engagements, would render them more attached to it. The fear of losing the esteem of their friends, would make them more punctual in the fulfilment of their duties. Further, the certainty they have, from their birth, of attaining to the most elevated posts, would render them the most efficient members to labour usefully in forwarding the great objects proposed. And let them not fear that in procuring the liberty and happiness of mankind they injure their own interests: for, independently of being themselves the first victims of despotism, they have only to turn their eyes towards England. Have the nobles of that country lost any of their rights, or any of the splendour of their station, because they have not the power of oppression and injustice?—or has the abolition of average labour rendered their estates less productive? Quite the

reverse. Liberty benefits every one, except the despot, and the cruel and unjust man.

II. A candidate must possess either property, or talents that secure him against indigence. Poverty renders a man too liable to undertake any thing that may extricate him from it, to justify his being made acquainted with a project like the present. It must be concealed from an individual in such a situation, or likely hereafter to be so situated.

III. Although probity must be considered an indispensable qualification in a candidate, he must, nevertheless, be also a man of strict propriety of conduct. A prodigal voluptuary squanders and wastes his fortune, however considerable it may be, and finds himself under the necessity of doing many blameable things, in order to repair the effects of his improvidence. He might thus frequently be unable to fulfil his duties in the institution, or might perhaps even injure or betray its best interests.

IV. As prudence is an indispensable qualification, no member shall be admitted under thirty years of age.

V. He must have obtained, in Free-masonry, the three first degrees at least, and must have given, during a lapse of time, not less than three years, by his constant attendance at the labours of one or more lodges, proof of prudence and attachment to the public good.

VI. Independently of probity, an indispensable qualification in a candidate must be firmness. He

must possess a manly and courageous manner of thinking, and a strong feeling of fame and honour. Not that this institution can require great personal sacrifices: if such were the case, it could not exist, on account of its numerous members. But it is impossible to rely on the attachment of a man to his connections, if he be destitute of courage and firmness; and of all characters in the world, that one with which the least is to be accomplished, is the timid and inconsiderate man, were he even, in other respects, endowed with good qualities, and every possible talent.

VII. A candidate must have received a certain education, acquired some knowledge, and be an enlightened man. He must be fond of study, and of discoursing upon serious and useful topics.

VIII. A religious fanatic shall be excluded, *ipso facto*, from the association. Not that it ought to be composed of men without religion—God forbid! But it is essentially necessary, that whilst they adore the supreme architect of nature, with sincerity, and each after his own fashion, they shall not condemn, in any way whatever, those who adore him according to any other mode, provided that mode does not enjoin actions evidently contrary to true morality, and to what is acknowledged and proved to promote the happiness of mankind. In a word, every candidate must be perfectly tolerant, and convinced that religion is an affair between God and each of his individual creatures,

in which no person has a right to interfere, against the will of the party interested. Such shall be the qualifications demanded of the candidates; and if the association is to yield the desired fruits, those regulations must be inflexibly acted upon. Fresh proofs must even be required, whenever a brother shall pass from the first to the second degree of the association, which promotion shall not take place unless it has been remarked that the brother's enthusiasm in favour of humanity has acquired additional energy. If he feel himself displeased at this, he will perhaps withdraw from the institution. But what matters his secession?—and what will he be able to say, that, far from injuring the association, will not redound to its glory? This is not the case with the second degree. An enemy might, however noble his principles, present it under an odious light, dangerous to the members. This is the reason why the choice for this degree must be made with the utmost caution.

CHAPTER III.

DUTIES TO WHICH THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION
OBLIGE THEMSELVES.

ARTICLE I.—*General Duties.*

I. The members of the association, resident in the same place, shall be united in bonds of friendship, which

is of easy accomplishment, as they all must be of an honourable station in society.

II. Sure signs and words will enable them to recognise each other, and they shall not conceal themselves from those who may prove themselves brothers.

III. There shall not exist any charitable fund in the society, because it is not anticipated that any member can stand in need of it; and because, if, by any extraordinary chance, such should happen to be the case, as all the members are masons, the person so situated might have recourse to their lodges.

It follows from this, that no member of the society shall ask pecuniary assistance from the other members. But they will render reciprocally to each other every service which intimate friends, bound by the most noble obligations, owe to one another.

IV. Above all, they shall accept collectively the trust that may be left to them by a dying B., either for the education or guardianship of his children or other persons. This, however, shall not force them to incur any expense, unless from the natural impulse of their own generosity.

V. The members shall always take care to manage things in such a way, that the papers belonging to the institution may never fall into profane hands.

ARTICLE II.—*Duties of the Brothers of the inferior Degree.*

Independently of the obligation of secrecy towards all uninitiated persons, of submission to the laws of the association, and all others of the same nature, they shall engage—

I. To promote by all means in their power the establishment of efficient instructors, particularly for the people.

II. To encourage every new attempt at correcting the present mode of education.

III. To encourage all establishments of public instruction, founded upon good principles, and not upon the pedantic plan, teeming with prejudice, hitherto followed in the education of youth.

IV. To acquire knowledge themselves, by reading good works, by conversing and meditating upon every object of public utility, and especially upon education.

V. Those members who are husbands and fathers, shall engage to superintend the education of their children, the development of their bodily strength, as well as their mental faculties, and to inspire them with those principles which form the basis of the society, and with those virtues without which they would not themselves have been received among its members.

VI. To assist each other reciprocally, in order that

the united forces of the masonic lodges to which they belong, may concur in the same object with themselves.

ARTICLE III.—*Duties of the Brothers of the superior Degree.*

These brothers engage—

I. On their initiation to this degree, and by the most sacred obligations never to quit it nor detach themselves from it, on any pretence whatever, and to whatever height of fortune they may rise; never to cease observing all the obligations contracted in it; always to acknowledge the members, and never to break off their connection with them; for the more they acquire power and influence, the more they will be enabled to fulfil the object of this degree. If a brother is member of the sovereignty of a state, or becomes the minister or favourite of a monarch, he shall employ all his influence to promote the object of the association. He shall, acting however with discernment, inspire his sovereign with his own views of love, humanity and justice. He shall prevent him, as much as lies in his power, from acts of oppression, from yielding to ruinous profuseness, boundless ambition, or insatiable avarice. He shall render to his brethren an account of what he may have done in the pursuit of this plan, in order to receive from them the just meed of praise and esteem of which he shall have proved himself worthy.

II. To abolish, as much as lies in their power, the

slavery of the peasants, the subjection of men to the glebe, the rights of mortmain, and all those rights and customs which degrade humanity, and are remnants of the frightful barbarity of our ancestors.

In explanation of this article, it is necessary to state that the association does not exact supernatural sacrifices of generosity. As these are repugnant to the heart of man, the institution could not exist if such were required. Thus, it is not expected that a nobleman should grant freedom to all his peasants without compensation; but he will certainly derive a much greater advantage from establishing them as small farmers upon their portion of land, than from keeping them always in slavery. The estates, in England, cultivated upon this plan, are infinitely more productive than those of our country, where the peasants are serfs.

III. To concur by all the means in their power in abolishing average labour, upon condition of equitable compensation, the advantage of which is entirely in favour of the lord of the manor, as it has been incontestibly proved.

IV. To concur by all the means in their power in abolishing all craft, corporations, and companies—all impediments, in short, to industry. As every man must work, there must not exist, according to the laws of sound morality, any obstacle to his performance of this duty.

V. To concur by all the means in their power in

abolishing every restraint upon trade, by custom and excise dues, and imposts of every description, by which the farmers of the public revenue seize upon the substance of the nation, without the people knowing how much they give.

VI. To do every thing in their power to diminish the enormous taxes which the unfortunate people are at present obliged to pay.

VII. To make every possible effort to bring about a general tolerance of all religious opinions. Provided a man be useful to the state, of what consequence to the government is his belief? The example of Holland, England, and of the Colonies in America, prove the utility of this principle.

VIII. To use every exertion to abolish all ecclesiastical jurisdictions, diminish the number of priests, where that number is excessive, and wrest every weapon from the hand of superstition.

IX. To endeavour by all the means they possess to circumscribe despotism within narrower and less unjust limits. For Germany, they will labour to maintain the right of the States, and resist arbitrary power, and will spurn all vile motives of interest. As it is impossible to particularise upon this subject, every thing depending upon circumstances, the brothers will consult among themselves, in their assemblies, upon the means of fulfilling their engagements on this head. It shall form the subject of their maturest deliberations.

X. It is with this view that, as the brothers of the inferior degree will read with attention good works upon the education of all classes of men, those of the superior degree shall peruse and meditate upon all productions treating of legislation and government. They shall point out to each other, and jointly seek in them what may be applicable to their own cases.

XI. They shall every where oppose the injustice committed by powerful men; and if they cannot prevent unjust actions, they shall endeavour to proclaim them, and deliver up the authors to the rack of public opinion.

XII. For this purpose they shall support as much as possible the liberty of the press, the strongest barrier against tyranny and oppression; they shall distribute every where those writings which cause umbrage to despotism; they shall also assist the authors, of such productions, if men of talent, and if there is no malice or deception in their conduct.

XIII. In order still more to encourage the members of the association to act with zeal in the fulfilment of the above mentioned engagements to their fullest extent, they shall solemnly swear to assist with all their might those who, through excess of zeal in the performance of their obligations, may fall into misfortune. The names of those who are sufferers in the cause of humanity, shall be communi-

cated to all the B. Their noblest actions shall be made public, in order that they may enjoy the honour they deserve, and they shall be received with esteem by all their brethren. These things shall never fail to be mentioned in all the regular correspondence, between the enlightened lodges and their capital, and also between the different provinces.

Such is the sketch of the plan of an edifice, the details of which may be determined upon, as soon as it is founded.

BOOK VII.

ON the 7th of June 1777, Mirabeau was deposited in the donjon of Vincennes, where his captivity, especially at first, was even much more rigorous * than that of Sophie; and he was harassed by the same regret, the same desires, and the same anguish.

It was at this period that the correspondence commenced from the donjon of Vincennes. From this vast collection of letters have been taken, for thirty years past, the elements of the different accounts of Mirabeau's *private* life.

* The reader may form an idea of its severity from the following passage, transcribed from a letter published in the collection from Vincennes.

“ M. Lenoir was good enough to give orders, on the very day of my arrival at this place, that I should be allowed to write as much as I pleased. But I was for three weeks without paper or books, without even a change of linen, or a comb; nor did any barber make his appearance. Observe also, that during these three weeks, and especially during the first, I had fever and spit blood.”— Vol. iii. p. 436.

Mirabeau enters again into these particulars in p. 468 of the same volume.

This correspondence, as we shall presently make it appear, was permitted by M. Lenoir, the lieutenant-general of police, from a feeling of compassion which he was unable to resist, especially when he heard the eloquent complaints of a prisoner like Mirabeau, compared causes with effects, and became convinced that punishment had preceded error, which it had perhaps excited, and that however gross such error, the penalty had been out of proportion.

M. Lenoir, being placed at the head of a great administration, the aptitude and success of which have been much praised, had other interests to attend to besides those of public order. At a time when the absolute power of the throne was altogether transferred to its delegates, the very nature of his appointment made him exercise a kind of secret and domestic police, preservative and tutelary, which rendered him the superintendent, the mediator, and the arbitrator in a multitude of private facts and contentions. Quite as able, though less firm and more moral than Marc René d'Argenson, he, in the fulfilment of his duties, in some measure contributed to elevate and to dignify the police. Often, in the exercise of this delicate part of his office, his moderation and prudence led him to conceal facts, the publication of which would have produced irreparable consequences, or a highly immoral result. He brought back to reason and to honour minds which

had been transiently led astray by their passions. He enlightened in time many erring hearts that would have become perverted. He opportunely frustrated ill-judged attempts which might have degenerated into criminal acts.

M. Lenoir, whose time was nearly absorbed by his numerous occupations, had but little of it to spare for the daily solicitations of Mirabeau. But he was moved, and ultimately vanquished by his prisoner, whom he had seen during the first days of his captivity, and whose natural ascendancy increased the sympathy which attaches kindly hearts to such as nobly bear great misfortunes. In the beginning of the year 1778, M. Lenoir charged another with a guardianship which he could not well exercise himself; but he was careful in the choice of this individual, and it proves the kind interest with which Mirabeau had inspired the lieutenant-general of police.

M. Boucher, first clerk of the Secret Department, was rather formal and severe. He was endowed with sound sense rather than a brilliant understanding; but under coldness of manner, he concealed a burning heart which passion had formerly shaken, and which was still occasionally wrought upon by the inspirations of humanity and justice.

This individual, appointed by M. Lenoir to superintend the management of the prisoner, became his

friend *. He was directed to receive, transmit, or withhold any part of the tolerated correspondence. For some time, he rigorously observed the injunctions given to him concerning the number, the intervals, the subjects and the tone of these letters; but, by degrees, he yielded to tender importunities, and was moved by repeated and warm expressions of eloquent gratitude. Perfectly easy in consequence of the resignation evinced by Mirabeau, and from his docility at the slightest warning, M. Boucher soon became more lenient, and ultimately neglected the restrictions which had been imposed. He permitted so many and such long letters to be written, that it may easily be supposed he could not always find time to read them before they were forwarded to their destination. He only required that the originals should be sent back to

* The correspondence from the Donjon of Vincennes contains, as it were on every page, evidence of the services which M. Boucher rendered to Mirabeau, with the greatest zeal and disinterestedness. We have considered due to this excellent man's memory, the transcription of still more special testimony than that in our text—a testimony the less liable to suspicion, as it is addressed to a third person.

“How much is he entitled to my gratitude? Has he not been for a length of time my only support, my only resource, my only comforter? From his most trifling attentions up to the greatest services, has he not constantly evinced the same zeal, the same indulgence, the same complaisance, and the same kindness?”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Dupont de Nemours, dated December 26th 1779.*

him *, and he scrupulously deposited them in the office boxes, where Manuel, the Procurator of the commune, found them thirteen years after, and took †, or rather stole them—for a public officer commits a theft when he sells or publishes for his own benefit the secret documents officially placed in his charge ‡.

Manuel was not so entirely absorbed by politics, as to be unable to perceive the advantage he could derive from this precious discovery, by making a good speculation for his vanity and cupidity. It flattered his vanity, by making him appear the friend and confidant of a great man, whose posthumous works he was publishing. It ministered to his cupidity, for it promised to turn out a most lucrative book speculation. The publication of such a correspondence was likely to have a run on account of the subject, the period, and Mirabeau's name §.

* See Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. ii. pp. 89, 366.

† These details, confirmed by public notoriety, are sufficient to give the lie to the impudent falsehood (which we shall presently mention), wherein Manuel states “ that MANY of the letters from Vincennes were found UNDER THE RUINS OF THE BASTILLE, some of them at the MAIRIE, and that many were LENT OR SOLD BY FRIENDS OF SOPHIE AND GABRIEL, ALL OF THEM GIVEN BY GABRIEL HIMSELF.”—*Preliminary Discourse on the Collection from Vincennes*, vol. i. p. 43.

‡ This is the judgment passed upon the deed by many of Mirabeau's biographers, especially Cadet Gassicourt, 2nd edition, p. 19.

§ Manuel had already made a similar speculation with public

Manuel, hurried on by the enticement of gain, by the political fever which then preyed upon the whole nation, perhaps also by a secret anticipation of his own approaching catastrophe, bestowed no serious care upon the work. He did not even, notwithstanding all that he says to the contrary*, take the trouble to place the dated letters in their exact order, much less to make any research for the dates of those that had none. Wherever there were any gaps in the correspondence, he filled them up with fictitious letters, which he pretends to have been written to Sophie†. When he found incomplete fragments, he often united them at a venture with some where both the period and the subject were different‡. The consequence is strange nonsense, and

documents, which his office of Communal Procurator had placed at his disposal. He boasts, in the Preliminary Discourse to the Collection of Letters from Vincennes, p. 5, of having published the "Unveiled Police," Paris, 1791, 2 vols. 8vo.

* Pages 5 and 43 of the same Preliminary Discourse. He pretends "to have been a year in collecting, deciphering and arranging them."

This assertion is evidently as false as the whole romance contained in the emphatic and burlesque introduction placed by Manuel at the head of his edition.

† See particularly in the sequel of our narration the notes which have reference to pp. 235—243 of the third volume, p. 144 of the fourth, &c.

‡ See, for instance, the letter, without a date at the beginning, but which has that of August 9th placed in the eleventh page. The real date is August 22nd 1777, and the letter is inserted in the twenty-fifth page of vol. i. of the "Original Letters from the Donjon

inexplicable incoherencies. Forgetting subsequently that he had already inserted isolated fragments, he actually placed them again elsewhere, often using them twice and even three times *. Nay, more : having made stupid interpolations of these genuine fragments, Manuel often added forged ones, and we are able to prove, by some of the originals which we have in our possession, that such a commencement, or such a conclusion, or such a piece taken from the body of a printed letter, is mere invention, and can only have been fabricated by the editor †.

These faults of hasty publication, and interested precipitation, might easily be forgiven, when it is considered, on the one hand, that Manuel was absorbed by the political storm raging around him, which was about

of Vincennes." In the first lines Mirabeau talks of the "dreadful silence which has reigned round us DURING NEARLY TWO MONTHS," and on the other side of the leaf are these words: "you may see by what I have written to you FOR EIGHT MONTHS PAST." Now, on the 9th of August, only two months had elapsed since the incarceration of the two prisoners.

See a similar inaccuracy, exposed by a similar contradiction of dates, p. 120 of the same volume, &c. &c.

* We shall merely give a single instance: let our readers take the trouble to look at pages 173 and 403 of vol. i. and p. 365 of vol. ii. and they will find the same paragraph repeated three times word for word.

† We find a kind of acknowledgment of this in a sentence of the Preliminary Discourse already quoted, p. 5.

"I have sometimes been obliged to feel as he did, to GUESS what I no longer saw."

to destroy him ; and, on the other hand, that he was perhaps influenced by his engagement with the publisher, whose typography, full of inaccuracies and ignorance, is truly worthy of such an edition.

But what Manuel cannot be pardoned for, is the cynical carelessness which blinded him respecting the inexcusable fault, equally odious and unnecessary, of publishing the entire text of several of these letters,—which he had purloined for his own benefit.

He was, no doubt, anxious, after a long oblivion, to bring to light this unpublished correspondence, full of passion and eloquence, and so remarkable for the colouring and vigour of a most original style, replete with interesting facts, bold views on literature, politics, and philosophy, all which it was curious to meet with in Mirabeau's intimate and secret correspondence. At this nobody could feel surprised, nor be induced to find fault with the editor ; for his speculation, though mean and sordid, would never have been condemned by the public, which became enriched with so interesting and valuable a book. But there was no necessity for inserting in those letters the allusions and obscene descriptions which sully their pages, or distressing and disgraceful domestic details. What was the use of making an indignant public privy to the exaggeration and errors of a master-spirit, led astray by the feverish excitement, the two-fold intoxication of love and anger ? What was the use of repeating, even to loathing, those

furious and insane invectives uttered by a son against the father who held him captive?—by a husband deserted, and perhaps betrayed by a giddy woman?—by a brother angry with a sister *, who had abandoned him after having thrown him off his guard?—against another sister†, whom he supposed to have wronged him, but who never ceased to protect and to serve him, though he knew it not?—by a lover against a husband‡, and against a mother §, whose peace and happiness he had ruined? Why expose the hideous scene of domestic strife, or the accusations of tyranny, bad conduct, debauchery, and even incest, brought by a son against a father, by a father against a son, by a husband against a wife, by a brother against a sister? Why trumpet forth in the public streets so many deplorable secrets, generally concealed in the obscurity of private life ||? Why confide the existence of so much

* Madame de Cabris.

† Madame du Saillant.

‡ The Marquis of Monnier.

§ Madame de Ruffey.

|| Mirabeau's family did not forget what they owed to the illustrious deceased, to themselves, and to public decency. The revolutionary sequestration was already enforced on all the effects of the family, on account of the emigration of Viscount Mirabeau, Madame de Cabris, and Count du Saillant. This Count's mother took, nevertheless, the most active measures to prevent the publication of the "Letters from Vincennes." It may be seen in the postscript of the Preliminary Discourse by Manuel, with what presumptuous emphasis he speaks of the "OFFENCE committed by the municipal administrator who, accompanied by four or five men of the law, under military escort, presented himself,

turpitude to implacable political opponents, to clumsy panegyrists, or to famished writers ready to speculate upon a name justly renowned, and gratify their love of scandal? Why, finally, mix up filthy details with a work otherwise calculated to please, and in many respects to instruct? We do not fear to style this the editor's crime, which we can only attribute to the delirium of the times, and to the vilest of speculations—the desire of increasing the number of volumes. This collection, in four volumes, which alarms fathers of families, grieves the great man's admirers, scandalises public decency, and corrupts ignorant and weak minds, might, if judiciously reduced to three volumes, become an interesting and almost irreproachable work, full of power, psychological research, and specimens of style, the graces

in the name of Mirabeau's creditors"—at the instigation of Madame du Saillant, "to seize the letters," many of which were, as is alleged by the impudent editor, "found under the ruins of the Bastille, some at the Mairie, or were lent, or sold, or given to me by the friends of Sophie and Gabriel, who received them from Gabriel himself."

This visit led to an action at law. Manuel called about him some worthy auxiliaries of his disgraceful speculation. Regnaud de Saint Jean d'Angely, since so renowned, who was the lawyer in support of the opposition, was insulted, and even struck, at the Palais de Justice, by Manuel's friends; and it became impossible to follow up the suit, the more so as shortly after all the Mirabeaus who had remained at Paris, the Marchioness, M. and Madame du Saillant, and their six daughters, were thrown into the revolutionary prisons.

of which would not be sullied by any impurity, nor its beauties condemned on account of the danger of reading them.

Manuel, however, thought of "honouring Mirabeau," and "avenging his memory *," by publishing "the very original letters written from the donjon of Vincennes." In the first instance, he declares that "the whole of these letters were left to him by Gabriel himself," who said to him: "Publish them only after my death, for people are determined not to know me †."

* See p. 4 of the "Preliminary Discourse."

† P. 43 of the same "Preliminary Discourse." It appears that Manuel had given public notice of his intention; and, prior to the steps taken by Madame du Saillant, to which we have just now alluded, one of Mirabeau's executors did all he could to prevent the collection from appearing. This is proved by the letter addressed on the 21st of May 1791, by M. Frochot, to the Count of Lamareck, afterwards Prince Augustus of Arenberg, which we copy from the original draft.

"I learnt last night, Count, that M. Manuel, ex-administrator of police, is about to publish some of Mirabeau's letters, which he pretends were found after Mirabeau left the Donjon of Vincennes, in a corner of the prisoner's room. These letters or other papers were, it is said, under an envelope with this inscription:—'Papers to be read only after my death.' Whether this packet had been forgotten or whether it was purposely left there we know not, but the police took possession of it, and M. Manuel has probably withdrawn it from the archives and appropriated it to his own purposes. He opened it after Mirabeau's death, and a publisher has been named to me with whom he was in treaty; the name has escaped my memory, but can easily again be obtained should it be necessary. I thought it incumbent upon me to apprise you of Manuel's intention,

We must repel, nay, we must destroy this infamous falsehood, the execrable malignity of which we can happily prove.

and without prejudging the expediency of putting a stop to it, which is no easy matter, as we are unacquainted with the contents of the letters, I shall merely observe ;—1st, If the packet in question was found, as is alleged, in the Donjon of Vincennes, it should have remained at the police office, or been returned either to him who wrote the superscription, or at his decease to his heirs or executors ;—2nd, M. Manuel can have no right to appropriate this deposit, and it is a glaring breach of trust to have withdrawn it from the office ;—3rd, Supposing even that the packet had remained in the hands of the police after Mirabeau's decease, it is certain that the police could not publish its contents without the consent of the heirs ; and, M. Manuel is therefore bound to explain how he obtained them. Should you, sir, coincide with me in this opinion, I consider that it will be quite easy for you to force this ex-administrator to account for their being in his possession."

Though M. Frochot's name is most justly held in public estimation, and he was afterwards honourably distinguished in his high office, we still fancy that he is not sufficiently known. The dictates of gratitude induce us to insert a plain and brief notice concerning a man whose memory still awaits the encomiums of a biographer more capable than ourselves of doing justice to his memory*.

Nicholas Therese Benoit Frochot, having duly prosecuted his studies, and having for some time followed the military profession, became in 1789 Notary and Royal Provost at Aignay (Côte-d'Or), when he was elected by the bailiwick of Chatillon-sur-Seine, Deputy of the Tiers-Etat to the States General. At the Assembly

* There are two imperfect notices, though written with talent and benevolent justice, in the "Biography of Living Men," Paris, 1817, L. G. Michaud, vol. iii. p. 188 ; and in the "New Biography of Contemporaries," by M. M. Arnault, Jay, Jouy, &c. vol. vii. p. 378.

Mirabeau, having been a year in prison, was deprived for several weeks of the correspondence which was his

he became intimately connected with Mirabeau, and was most useful to him by the zeal of tender friendship, and by counsels emanating from a mind both contemplative and just in an eminent degree. Prior to 1791 M. Frochot had spoken from the tribune only in favour of the suppression of feudal and conventional privileges. He afterwards treated divers questions relative to the distinction which should be drawn between constituent bodies and national conventions, to the presentation of a constitution to the acceptance of the king, and to the attributes of an assembly of revision. When he became executor of his friend's last will, he discharged with zeal the duties it imposed upon him, and he apprised the Assembly of the insufficiency of the testator's estate. M. Frochot retired from public life, and was imprisoned in 1793. He afterwards held, for some time, the administration of the department of the Côte-d'Or, which had sent him to the legislative body, and in 1800 he was appointed Prefect of the Seine, and subsequently Counsellor of State, a Count of the Empire, and a grand officer of the Legion of Honour. During thirteen years he distinguished himself by his talents and integrity under an administration begun in difficult times, when everything was to be re-constructed, or rather created afresh—order, finances, regulation, subordination, hierarchy, and even pay and promotion. Though he was justly appreciated for his talents as an administrator, his virtue and devotedness, his knowledge and prudence, the latter of which were often done justice to in a state council so strongly composed as that of which he was a member, he was nevertheless sacrificed on the conspiracy of General Malet. M. Frochot was informed in the street of this rapid and unparalleled event, and applied to on the subject without having a moment's reflection. Weighed down by profound grief, he endeavoured to institute inquiries: it did not strike him at the moment that he should have put forth the claims of the King of Rome, and proclaimed—"The Emperor is dead! long live the Emperor!"

On the 24th of December 1812 he was dismissed; and the sensation which this act produced sufficiently proved that Napoleon had more

only solace, as he considered himself now sure of the absolute uselessness of his applications, and the impossibility of being listened to by the king and the ministers. He fancied himself certain that an irrevocable order had been given to deprive him absolutely of books, pens, ink, and paper. He thought that his son was dead ; he knew that his daughter was ill, and that Sophie was in despair. He was himself subject to spitting of blood, which he believed incurable. Thus left to the excess of maddening pain, Mirabeau took the resolution he had wrestled with

a mind to effect a *coup d'état* than to inflict personal disgrace—that the Emperor's aim was to strike those with awe who presumed to call in question the stability of the empire. On the day following Frochot's dismissal, Regnaud de Saint Jean d'Angely brought him a message from the Emperor, full of affection and confidence, and the promise of a speedy recal ; and on the 20th of March 1815 Frochot was actually appointed Counsellor of State and Prefect of the Mouths of the Rhone. His fair, impartial, and paternal administration secured the respect of all those who had the imperial rule in horror ; and on the 25th of June the author of this work, the obscure pupil and secretary of M. Frochot, saw those same Marseillaise who hunted and shot “ the imperialists,” surround with their homage, and accompany with their blessings, the courageous, loyal, and disinterested Prefect, whom they vainly strove to retain, and who, on the fall of the Emperor, laid down his authority without hesitation. He remained poor, but loaded with public esteem, and having become an agriculturist, lived very retired in his native commune, where his strength of body and serenity of mind promised him yet many years of life ; but he died on the 29th of July 1828, at the age of sixty-seven, broken-hearted at the death, which had occurred two months previously, of an only son, in every respect worthy of such a father.

for some time—that of committing suicide. He made all his preparations ; procured a certain quantity of acetate of copper (verdigris), by steeping and leaving copper coins in vinegar. He then wrote to Sophie, to the Marchioness, Marquis, and Viscount of Mirabeau, to M. Lenoir, and to M. Boucher, in a style remarkable for tenderness, eloquence, magnanimity, and heroism. These letters have been read in Manuel's collection by every body. Vol. iv. pp. 299—326 *.

At this moment, being about to quit life, he judged himself. Whatever resentment he felt at the injustice he had suffered, was assuaged by the consciousness of his errors, and by the kindness and generosity of his

* Manuel placed those letters at the end of the collection, because he had not their dates ; they were written in the second fortnight of June 1778, as is proved by the following passage :—

“ To you, good angel, whose benevolence proves unavailing, I address a deposit of which you may some day be called upon to make some use, and perhaps sooner than you are aware of, if I judge by the state of my mind and body. Be assured that I behold this moment without terror, and that I should view it without regret had I attended to some duties of which my situation does not allow me to acquit myself. I have requested you not to read the accompanying letters before I am gone ; I repeat my request, and send them to you open.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated June 20th 1778.*

We find in many letters from Vincennes expressions which lead us to suppose that Mirabeau meditated committing suicide ; and these expressions are often repeated. See vol. i. pp. 158, 285, 435, 457 ; vol. ii. pp. 267, 305, 379 ; vol. iii. p. 359.

nature. He condemned the vehemence of his justifications, and thus wrote to Sophie :—

“ I have burned my memoirs, which contained too strong a defence of my conduct.” (Page 304.)

Can it be believed, after these words, written in the presence of death, that Mirabeau should afterwards feel a wish to place before the public a correspondence and justifications a hundred times *stronger*, and sullied by recriminations equally useless and odious ?

Two years subsequently, Mirabeau heard from the police, that Brianson, partly to gratify his hatred, and partly to justify Madame de Cabris, intended to publish some letters in his possession, which the unfortunate fugitive had addressed to Sophie at the time they were all making preparation for flight. Mirabeau then wrote to Boucher, who was his good angel :—

“ I cannot believe Madame de Cabris foolish enough to be guilty of such perfidy, which would injure her irreparably in the opinion of every body, and which I would avenge if it tended to expose Sophie, were the culprit hid in the centre of the earth *.”

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated September 6th 1780.

In order not to delay the proof we are anxious to establish, we here insert another passage from the same letter.

Some days after, Mirabeau thus wrote to his sister, Madame du Saillant:—

“ I am threatened with even worse evils. Monsters that infest the streets of Paris, whilst so many virtuous people languish at Bicêtre and in the galleys, openly boast that they will publish my correspondence with the unfortunate victim of my love ! This is dreadful ; and if I survived, it would be to take revenge, were my ruin the consequence * ! ”

Can it be believed, on reading this sudden burst of a soul in anguish, and while we hear this cry of indignation and honour, that Manuel was autho-

“ I confess the sentence that ends your letter alarms and surprises me ; ‘ I am much afraid,’ you say, ‘ that those steps are unavailing.’ Pray tell me, for what occasion are those blows of authority reserved ? Will they all tend to crush the innocent, and minister to the will of the tyrants in office ? On whom shall they fall if not upon the traitors who could atrociously violate a deposit, and reveal the most distressing secrets of two distinguished families ? ”

Mirabeau’s anxious wishes were soon gratified.

“ You restore me to life by setting my mind at ease concerning Brianson. How often has my good angel already saved me ! Good and wise friend, you have gained a man who has undoubtedly been guilty of many errors, but was never yet capable of committing a crime ; who worships gratitude and honour as his divinities, and to his latest breath belongs entirely to you and yours ! ”—
Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated September 27th 1780.

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated September 10th 1780. A *fac simile* is given of the three sentences just quoted.

rised by Mirabeau to publish the letters written from the donjon of Vincennes?

Besides, were not Mirabeau's feelings and situation changed after a lapse of twelve years? Undoubtedly they were; and this change completes a refutation so evident, that we merely dwell upon it with a view of clearing Mirabeau's memory, even beyond necessity; for it has been cruelly outraged by this most odious and most absurd of calumnies.

It will easily be conceived that Mirabeau, destined to enjoy the highest influence and moral power to which a private individual can attain, would have been greatly afflicted at the idea of publicity being given to the errors and misfortunes of his youth. It was the dread of this publicity that kept him so long from the station to which he was called by his birth, his labours, his genius, at the hitherto unparalleled juncture for which he seemed specially formed, or which seemed to occur on purpose for him. He foresaw that those distressing recollections would incessantly be brought forward by political enemies, excited by the doctrines he had so loudly proclaimed during the last fifteen years, and which he was then putting in practice. For he constantly exasperated those enemies by his haughtiness, both natural and assumed. He felt that the deplorable occurrences of former times would place him in a worse light in proportion as he became elevated in station.

Thus, in society, in the several *prefaces* to his works*, even at the tribune† he spoke spontaneously of his past life, to meet whatever might be said on the subject. At the commencement of his most important and best digested work, "The Prussian Monarchy," he offered to his father a feeling testimony of veneration and tenderness, in which he most eloquently disclaimed the past.

At the close of 1790, the excellent Madame du Sallant, with her brother's consent, negociated a speedy reconciliation between Mirabeau, so gloriously regenerated, and the wife who had rejected him in a court of justice, when he claimed her immediately after his liberation from prison‡, a reconciliation already called for, ever since the month of March 1789, by popular acclamation and public enthusiasm §.

An end was thus about to be put to the afflicting contrast which Mirabeau's situation had till then presented,

* "Moses Mendelsohn," *preface*, p. 19; "Caisse d'Escompte," *preface*, pp. 13, 15; "Answer to the writer of the 'Water Company' in Paris," p. 100; "Denunciation of Stock-jobbing," p. 19; "Cérutti's Correspondence," p. 19; dedication of "the Prussian Monarchy," pp. 5, 7, &c. &c.

† Session of the 18th of August 1789, concerning the "Declaration of the Rights of Man;" of the 11th of September 1790, on the case of Trouard de Riolles, &c.

‡ Decree of the Parliament of Provence, of the 5th of July 1783.

§ See later, the account of the ovations which Mirabeau received on the 7th of March 1789, at Aix, at Marseilles, and on his road.

between his private character and his great political existence. And would he then think of rekindling so many painful recollections, and allow the publication, henceforward universal and irretrievable, of facts hidden in private correspondence, and in law proceedings known only in distant and confined localities, and, like all such documents, forgotten, and which parties can always disavow as not being their own work! Would he at this period have published in his own name, and as his own spontaneous production, so many disgraceful facts, so many falsehoods, so many exaggerated calumnies, so many horrible accusations? Would he have assumed the authorship of so foul a collection of scandal and infamy? Would he have re-opened and envenomed the wounds inflicted on three noble families? Would he have excluded himself from the recovery of his character? Was it likely that he would thus cut off the road to honour and immortal fame, which he was destined to run?

No one can ever acknowledge in Manuel, the friend, the confidant, the trustee of Mirabeau. We affirm that the latter never knew, and most probably never saw him. No one will ever suppose that Mirabeau gave his consent to a publication calculated to blast his present prospects, and couple his name with infamy; a publication, against which he on the contrary often protested, as if a secret anticipation had shown him in

the future the scandalous act by which an impostor would cast a slur upon his memory.

This is the whole truth respecting the publication of the collection of letters from Vincennes, which so much disgraces, and at the same time sheds so much lustre upon Mirabeau's name. In this work, all he was capable of is found : his strength and his weakness, his talents and his candour, his violence and his kindness, his passion and his patience, his ability and his impetuosity, his horror of despotism and his family pride, his sudden dejection, and that natural confidence which always led him to entertain a good opinion of his own combinations and projects ;—in a word, all that placed and kept him beyond the ordinary chances of men—his passions, his genius, and his destiny. He was a singular being ; an exception, the only one of his kind. His moving portrait is to be found in this collection, which, it must be admitted, gives a pretty accurate representation of his character. His mind appears a compound of good and evil, of grandeur and littleness ; but the good predominates over the evil, and nobleness blots out degradation. His virtues arise out of his very nature and essence ; whilst his bad qualities, and what was degrading in him, must principally be attributed to the unjust prejudices, false measures, and odious persecutions by which he was constantly oppressed *.

* “ Weigh, and judge whether my honour was sullied by meanness ; whether my heart is a sink of corruption ; whether my suffer-

This epistolary collection from the donjon of Vincennes will ever remain a blot upon Mirabeau's fame. The great publicity * given to it has perpetuated, with regard to his memory, that fatality, which during his life continually placed his character in a false light, and led his contemporaries to form a wrong judgment of the man who most engrossed their attention. We can scarcely mention any part of the work as undeserving of censure, except that portion of the first volume containing the defence, dated March 1st 1778, (from page 287 to 426 †,) to which we constantly refer, and which is

ings are proportioned to my errors ; whether I deserved to be branded and tortured ; whether I am entitled to justice and revenge !" — *Second Case for Counsel's Opinion on behalf of the Count of Mirabeau against the Marquis of Monnier*, p. 40, of the 12mo edit.

* Some biographers pretend that more than fifty thousand copies were sold. Peuchet, however, whose whole life was spent in making compilations and book speculations (we take good care not to style them literature), either did not, or pretended not to know this very notorious fact, when, wishing to publish a copy of this correspondence, he states in his peculiar style :—

"The letters which he (Mirabeau) wrote to this disconsolate woman (Sophie), who ill deserved such great misfortune, form one of the most interesting and most unknown portions of his (Mirabeau's) life." — Vol. i. p. 250.

† Peuchet says, vol. i. p. 274, "It would have been fortunate if the author had been as faithful to truth as he was energetic and eloquent !" We most strongly repel this unjust accusation. We do not deny that this paper contains ingenious sophistry and an unsatisfactory justification ; but there is not a single fact at variance with truth ; nor is a single truth omitted, however embarrassing to the author.

admirable. It is clear, methodical, logical, moderate, and elegant. Would to Heaven that the public had only become acquainted with Mirabeau's private life through this document! No shade would then obscure his great reputation; no humiliating recollections would then attach to his name. The prejudices which exaggerate Mirabeau's errors, and accuse him of vices he never displayed, would not then be indiscriminately taken advantage of by the hatred of political adversaries, by the credulity of the indolent, by the avidity of compilers, by the silly jealousy of exasperated detractors of great men and things, or by the systematic spirit of some dreamers, whose fancy is so strongly directed to errors and vices, that they occasionally invent them, and are, therefore, the readier to insert in their fantastic compositions those offered to them by other inventors.

Finally, the truth which we are anxious to establish would have shone in brilliant and pure lustre upon Mirabeau's tomb, if the purloiner of his posthumous letters had only published the defence we recommend to perusal, and of which the author himself said :—

“ It contains only facts more weakened to my disadvantage than exaggerated in my favour *.”

* Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. iii. p. 262. We shall hereafter have occasion to refer to a letter in which Mirabeau thus expresses himself:—

“ I mention everything in that statement, to which I challenge all

Whatever be the nature of the correspondence from Vincennes, we are, thank God, not limited like our predecessors to that source, which is but too often impure, for the materials which form our work. Other documents as we have already stated, quite as authentic, if not more so, inasmuch as they have not been falsified, have already enabled us to eradicate errors which had gained credence, and to substantiate truths which were still doubtful. We have in our possession many letters from both the prisoners, withdrawn from the vigilance of the police and which had been intrusted to secret emissaries. Of these we shall make the use which Manuel ought to have made of the others, retaining only what may gratify innocent curiosity, tend to give useful explanations, and move people's sympathy without affecting their morals. We have likewise the original drafts of more than

possible contradiction, fully persuaded as I am that it will not receive any."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated May 16th 1779.*

These observations were written when we were made acquainted with the judgment which Laharpe passed upon the "Correspondence from Vincennes," in an article contained in pp. 277—289 of the unpublished *Miscellanies of Literature*, collected by J. B. Salgues, Paris, Chaumerot, 1810. This article contains such a judgment, and so remarkable from the authority of a judge generally unfavourable to Mirabeau, that we should have substituted it for our own reflections had we not taken the firm resolution of never borrowing from printed documents, except in cases of strict necessity and evident utility.

three hundred letters addressed by Mirabeau to Boucher, and Dupont de Nemours; also many of the answers to them. Finally we possess a voluminous family correspondence which forms the counterpoise of that published by Manuel, more particularly as regards the period of Mirabeau's detention in the donjon of Vincennes. We shall avail ourselves of this unpublished correspondence which is not less interesting than the other; and in which, allowing for the lawful artifices of defence and justification, we find Mirabeau better portrayed by himself, and more preremptorily justified, as he continually triumphs over his adversaries, whose replies, which we likewise insert word for word, or in extracts, will enable the public to hear both sides of the question.

We have made copious extracts, which we might easily have increased tenfold. Fearful however of drawing too largely from these materials, we hesitated for some time before we used any portion of them.

We asked ourselves whether it would not be disadvantageous to the work, for we are absolutely free from the pride of authorship, and to Mirabeau's memory, to refer by extracts to personal facts which have already been too much before the public; whether it would not be more advisable to let the recollection of so much domestic misery gradually merge in immense and never-fading celebrity, as the spots on the sun's disc are lost in its dazzling light; whether we

might not expose ourselves like others to the reproach of being too prolix ; finally whether by bringing this correspondence before the public, discredit might not, in some measure, be cast upon it, from the restraint under which Mirabeau laboured when claiming his freedom, and the manner necessarily assumed by him in vindicating himself, and by ourselves in vindicating him. But on attentively considering these objections, we were induced to forego them.

Some eminent men, of even modern times, have had the good fortune to appear before posterity in a favourable light, only through the medium of their public actions and works. Mirabeau has not enjoyed this valuable advantage. His lawsuits, and more especially an odious speculation, have indiscriminately exposed and simultaneously brought to the broad face of day both his private and his public life, which are intimately blended in the same publication. It is now altogether impossible to separate them : vain would it be to publish a hundred editions of his works without a particle of personality ; general recollection would constantly arise against this unavailing silence, and present under the same aspect, the dissolute young man and the laborious adult, the rebellious son and the eloquent legislator, the thoughtless profligate and the founder of a new political order. Publishers would thence be obliged, as formerly, to procure biographical notices for such editions. If,

anxious to represent under favourable colours a great man, whose enemies time has reduced to silence, and whose works now elicit almost universal admiration, they had recourse to enlightened and well disposed writers only, such as Chaussard, Cadet Gassicourt, Barthe, Mérilhou and some others,—still for want of better, they must of necessity employ existing materials; that is to say imperfect notices, or odious pamphlets not sufficiently contradicted; and, the most fallacious of all, existing publications, such as Manuel's collection, in which nearly each letter more or less violates truth as much as it does reason and public decency,

These considerations called for the additional research and statements supported by evidence, which have long occupied us, and became imperative upon us from the conviction of our understanding, the feelings of our heart, and the last wishes expressed by Mirabeau himself. These motives removed all our doubts, and made us resolve to take from the correspondence all that bears reference to the long and difficult negociation which preceded Mirabeau's release, and is but imperfectly stated even in Manuel's collection, terminating October 12th 1780 *, namely two months prior to that event. These materials moreover enable us to show

* We may even say that the sequel of the correspondence is much sooner closed in Manuel's collection, as he published only fifteen letters for the first nine months of the year 1780, whilst he

Mirabeau, portrayed by himself as before, brought back to the path of reason, to the feelings of nature, and altogether cured of the delirious fever, the disgraceful and distressing effects of which Manuel has so impudently exposed.

Nevertheless, ought we to run the further risk of deceiving ourselves with regard to the interest and merit of our materials, and expose ourselves to the reproach of tedious loquacity and mean calculation, so justly imputed to the biographer Peuchet? We have seriously considered this point also. Discarding on the one hand all comparison with that writer, because he has merely embodied in his too voluminous work, documents often before published, without adding a single fact unknown until his work appeared, whilst we, with the exception of a few pages, employ only unpublished documents; considering on the other hand that the general sympathy attached to Mirabeau's memory would give some interest to facts that related to him, the more so as they are supplied by himself—and his errors, as well as his misfortunes, having already been brought before the public by the publication of recriminatory complaints which have been justly condemned

gives us twenty-six for the last six months of 1777, fifty-three for 1778, and thirty-six for 1779. Though we do not possess all that was written by the two lovers, we have a hundred and fourteen of their letters dated in 1780.

for their acrimony, we consider ourselves justified in entering fully into the affecting particulars which clear his character, and confer honour upon his memory.

Finally, may we credit Mirabeau's repentance as we did his errors? Will his excuses not obtain the same belief as his libels? We trust they will, because we fancy we have proved that virtuous and delicate feelings were more natural to him than depraved taste and hateful passions. We likewise show that his pen by purifying itself has lost none of its power and eloquence.

When Mirabeau was confined, on the 7th of June 1777, in the Donjon of Vincennes, he first of all commenced a correspondence with Sophie; and afterwards, but with much less ardour, he tried to obtain his release.

This correspondence could not fail in the first instance to meet with many obstacles. We have stated those of which Sophie complained. Her letters express great anguish.

“ I write continually, and you cannot read my letters. You also write and nothing can reach me. I weep almost incessantly, and I contain myself merely that I may not injure your son *. O! God! that I

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated June 15th 1777. She was then two months pregnant.

should never hear from you ! This is really dreadful, and will deprive us both of life ! May I die a thousand deaths if ever I consent to it ; at that price we would refuse all the treasures and thrones of the earth *. What ! no letters ! not one word ! not a soul who has seen and spoken to you ! Oh ! how dreadful are the pangs I endure ! I am certain that I am quite as miserable as you are ; I swear that I do not wish to be less so †. We are then come to that month of July, when we could no longer be together ‡ ! The first year we saw each other without daring, or rather without thinking of loving one another § ; the second we did love—ah ! you know it well ! But notwithstanding my repeated endeavours, we could not come nearer to each other. This year, O God ! we are torn asunder in the midst of our happiness, carried away by our enemies, and both imprisoned ! Were we only together, dungeons would have charms, and we would kiss the fetters that bound us to the same stake || ! What wretchedness is in store for us !—with what pleasure would we have died when we

* Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 16th 1777.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 23rd 1777.

‡ 1775.

§ “ Without thinking of loving one another.” This confirms what we have stated elsewhere, and contradicts Peuchet’s conjectures, vol. i. p. 154.

|| Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, July 1st 1777.

parted ! Alas ! we both suffer so much as to be surprised that we are still alive * ! I can live no longer if I do not hear from you. What a service would he render us who should cut off from our lives the time we are to pass out of each other's presence ! I am often obliged to recal to mind your prohibition, your promises, and your son, that I may be able to endure my distress. I do endure and resist it. I am not even ill ; I could wish I were so if I did not happen to be pregnant. I may yet become so, for all things must have an end. I tell you, and I say it also to our executioners, I shall not always be pregnant † !”

Mirabeau on the other hand felt the same torments. Having clandestinely and precipitately exhausted some scraps of paper he had been able to obtain, he had no longer the means of writing, for he found it impossible

* Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated July 23rd 1777.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated July 24th 1777.

We see in this letter another proof of that fatal disposition to suicide displayed by Sophie.

“ I am here much occupied with gay thoughts. I have just recollected a poison which produces the same effect as opium, and even the taste of which is not unpleasant. It is a decoction of laurel berries. I have heard of the fatal effect of a small dose. People seem resolved to reduce us to these measures. Alas ! were it only in each other's arms we were doomed to die !—were I to die on Gabriel's bosom I should still know happiness !”

See also in the collection of Letters from Vincennes, what Mirabeau wrote to her on this subject, vol. ii. p. 267.

to obtain a fresh supply *. This kind of privation was insupportable to him ; it almost drove him mad, and would no doubt have killed him if he had not succeeded in raising an interest in those who had charge of his person.

In this he did succeed ; he states it himself.

“ The energy of our passion has affected these people. Fearful of reducing us to despair, they have granted us a favour perhaps without precedent. Though at bottom it is but just and reasonable, still it appears strange when seen through the mists of prejudice †.”

The favour which saved Mirabeau's life, as he never ceased repeating in his letters, was the permission, for which he was indebted to M. Lenoir, to write to Sophie, and receive letters from her. This correspondence occupied almost the whole of his time, the least delay tortured him, and he incessantly teased both the public authorities (Manuel's collection affords us a thousand proofs of it which we do not adduce because they are published) and the friend whom misfortune had gained him.

“ O good angel ! have you then condemned me ? Are you capable of counting the crumbs which avaricious pity throws to a hungry wretch ? Are you aware that twenty-five days have elapsed since I have had any

* Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 33, 34, 60, 116.

† Idem, vol. ii. p. 28 ; vol. iii. pp. 93, 111, 581.

celestial manna? Are you aware that I weep, or rather do you wish that my tears may blind me before my time? Do you know that the last sparks of my happiness are becoming fainter, and will be entirely extinguished if you do not again revive them with your benevolent breath? Consider that nothing in the world can indemnify me for a delay, not even your own presence, for you will bring me only one. This letter and yourself would not fail to reach me, were the privation which makes me disconsolate to end this very day *! My good angel, whenever you make a mistake, let it be, I entreat you, at your own expense, and not at mine; and as your mistake has caused me four days' delay, and a thousand uneasy moments, you owe me one, two, even three letters more for it. I really let you off easily; but attend to what I say, else I shall withdraw my absolution, and it would be rather a strange sight to behold an excommunicated angel †!"

Though the prisoner's captivity was much mitigated, he never ceased to solicit his release, and that of his friend, as either a favour, or an act of justice; for they had not obtained a regular trial, though they demanded one. Besides his frequent letters to M. Lenoir,

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated January 30th 1778.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated February 13th 1779.

whose limited power could be of service to him only in matters of minor importance, he tried to obtain a hearing elsewhere. He had already, on the 17th of November 1777, written to the Duke of Noailles, who was related to his mother. This letter is to be found in the correspondence from Vincennes*.

On the 1st of May 1778, he forwarded a memorial to the minister Amelot†. On the 8th of May, he sent a petition to the king‡, in which, as he says, “the monarch must find more truths than he will hear in the whole course of his reign. I am not only unable to assume a mean, cringing tone, but I cannot refrain from speaking with more severity to the rulers of the earth, than I would to other people. The voices of nature and freedom resound so strongly in my ears, the hatred of despotism so fully occupies my heart, that my thoughts and style are affected by them, whatever I may attempt to the contrary. As I have stated to M. Lenoir§, I dare not hope that my petition will reach the monarch. Truth is too coarse to be allowed to approach the throne in her natural guise: she must be clad in a court-dress, which means, that we must provide her with a mask, to say no worse||.”

* Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 217.

† Ibid., vol. ii. p. 126.

‡ Ibid., vol. ii. p. 129.

§ Ibid., vol. i. p. 125.

|| Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Sophie, April 29th 1778

On the same day, and on the 20th of February, the prisoner wrote two letters to the minister Maurepas *, an old man, at once frivolous and harsh †, whom the Marquis of Mirabeau almost entirely governed. These letters were very affecting, but much too violent ‡ not to

* Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. ii. p. 143; vol. iii. p. 88.

† We find in two letters from the Bailli of Mirabeau some observations which appear just and pointed, respecting M. de Maurepas and the unfortunate monarch who made choice of him without knowing him, thinking that he must be wise because he was old, and blindly abandoned himself to an individual unfit for his office, for the times in which he lived, and for a monarch as weak as he was virtuous, and whose only mentor this minister was for the space of seven years.

“With respect to Maurepas, he is prone to ill humour; besides, he values morals, decency, and honour only so far as they are found convenient and amusing.”—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 26th 1781.*

“What can you expect from that old parrot of the regency, in the presence of his frightened master, who is the man of Esop, the man of nature, the peasant of the Danube, and surrounded as men of his description generally are?”—*Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated April 24th 1781.*

‡ As we read them in the “Collection of Letters from Vincennes,” we ask ourselves what a prisoner might expect from a minister by addressing such language to him. Mirabeau says elsewhere:—

“I have written to the prime minister, and I apprise all my fellow citizens that the most courageous and the purest virtue may become indignant, and ruffled even to ferocity. It is especially the denial of justice which reduces strong minds to excessive despair.

prove dangerous to the writer. He also at that period employed himself in extracting from his father's principal work, "The Friend of Men," a certain number of maxims on the law of nature and that of nations, on "lettres de cachet," on illegal detentions, on the denial of justice, on the withdrawal of cases from their proper judges, and on the abuse of despotism *. Mirabeau accompanied those extracts with strong commentaries, in which he contrasted the theory of the philanthropic author with the practice of the unjust father and persecutor †.

He again wrote two letters to M. de Maurepas, the one dated October 18th 1778, which remained unpub-

Despotism, which renders the mind degenerate, preys upon, and annihilates everything, and will transform the most useful passions, the most distinguished talents, and the most praiseworthy feelings into an inexhaustible source of pain, misfortune, and crime. But the latter should be imputed to the sordid and narrow-minded beings who consider all warmth of feeling a dangerous folly, all lofty ideas a reprehensible singularity, and want to reduce men to the measure of their tyranny; not unlike that cruel Procrustes, who had his victims placed on a bed of iron, causing them, if found too short, to be stretched to its length, and to be mutilated if found to exceed this length."— *Lettres de Cachet*, vol. i. p. 262.

Mirabeau might easily have written in this style to M. de Maurepas, but this passage is not found in any of the Letters of the Collection from Vincennes.

* Mirabeau, without naming his father, contrasted him with himself in the "Lettres de Cachet," particularly in vol. i. pp. 257—336.

† Original Letters written from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. ii. pp. 160—229; vol. iii. p. 86.

lished, and to which we shall refer presently; the other dated February 20th 1779, inserted in Manuel's collection *, and not less bitter than the first of the three. There is absolutely nothing, however, either in public documents, or in our private papers, calculated to make us believe that so many energetic representations and substantiated facts, produced the least effect, or that they were even read, or led to the slightest investigation. We may even presume that they were totally disregarded, from the very circumstance of their having been afterwards published by Manuel, who could only have obtained them at the police office, where the prisoner's petitions would surely not have been found, had they, when they were written, been forwarded to the persons for whom they were intended.

Mirabeau felt persuaded that he should not be set at liberty without certain conditions; but the hope of obtaining his freedom at any price, made him abandon the idea of suicide. He at one moment thought he should be permitted to go into exile. His military inclinations, and especially his eager desire for freedom, had already, as it did in 1776, suggested the idea of entering a foreign service, and many of his letters apprised Sophie of this, and greatly alarmed her. At the period our narrative has now reached, people's minds

* Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. iii. p. 86.

in France were much occupied with the war waged by the North American provinces, which till then belonged to England, against the mother country, whose yoke they wanted to shake off. Their cause was enthusiastically espoused by many Frenchmen. These crossed the Atlantic without the consent, and even contrary to the commands of the king, whose policy only declared itself at a later period. Mirabeau wished to join this gallant expedition. On the 18th of November 1776, he wrote to M. de Maurepas in the following terms—

“ I have not at present the honour of offering you a justification. As none of my former letters have produced any change in my condition, as I am even refused the distressing advantage of being heard in my own defence and confronted with my accusers, I have but one request to make, which I believe will not displease my father, and will relieve your natural kindness, against which you have undoubtedly been compelled to struggle, since you have treated me with so much harshness.

“ The political events which have transpired since my confinement will surely require the sending of troops to America *, perhaps to the Indies. I entreat you to

* The war of American independence commenced in April 1775. The enlightened and penetrating mind of the Bailli had long foreseen that event, and those which followed it.

“ Our least sharp-sighted people declare that in less than forty

let me go to one of those countries. There is always a want of men in such destructive climates, and I shall surely make a good soldier. Here I have ceased to live, without even enjoying the repose of death. I merely vegetate, and am of no earthly use. Permit me to place the ocean between my father and me. I promise you, Sir, nay, I swear that it shall only bring back either a certificate of my death, or the renown of actions which will loudly give the lie to my mean and perfidious detractors, and make them feel compunction for the years of which I have been deprived. If I were banished to a corner of the earth, I should, as regards France, be no less a prisoner than I am here; and the king would have another subject who would devote his life to him."

This letter was not more successful than the others; and Mirabeau often renewed his proposal, but to no purpose. This may be seen in the collection of letters from Vincennes*.

years the new world will have shaken off the yoke of the old, and will treat with her on terms of equality. The English colonies will set the example, and New England shows scarcely greater relative subordination than Carthage did to Tyre. I, who have a closer view of the prevailing stagnation, am of opinion that the time is much nearer at hand."—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated September 26th 1754, from Guadeloupe.*

* Vol. i. p. 424; vol. iii. p. 369. He likewise expressed his wish and intention in the "*Lettres de Cachet*," vol. i. p. 284.

The situation, however, which had suggested this application, became intolerable. The prisoner's imagination began to work, and even made him involuntarily commit an injustice towards Sophie herself.

"I have a million of motives for not imputing to the very excellent M. B. (Boucher) a lengthened delay which seemed to cause him as much pain as it did me. Let me ask you whom I am to blame for making me pass ten days and eleven nights in the agonies of pain and uncertainty? I do not know whether I should not blame yourself: but if you already make so light of the wretch who from dawn of day to the morrow is occupied with you alone, dreams of you, thinks of you, speaks to you, writes to you and for you;—if there be any other cause than impossibility that makes you show such little concern for my anguish, my fears, my illusions, the delirium of that imagination which you alone inflame, of that heart over which you hold such despotic sway, of those senses which outlive themselves to burn again at your remembrance with all the fires of love, then Gabriel is still unhappier than he thought he was*."

He soon, however, blamed himself for this injustice; but the painful sense of his situation made him

"I, who shall not end my days in a land sullied by despotism if I can but break my fetters; . . . I, who, if I were not kept in chains, would go to learn from them, and to fight for them."

* (Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. iii. p. 91.

give vent to other complaints as violent, though less unjust.

“ Rigorous fate! cruel perplexity! How much longer will you oppress a being that is sinking under his sufferings? I am tormented with pangs I never felt before. I would willingly say, with Orestes

My innocence has at length become a burthen to me!

I have no peace with my implacable enemies; I shall find it only in my grave. Pity never enters their rancorous hearts. As cruel as they are unjust, their commiseration will not grant what their iniquity refuses. This is indeed too much! I know not whether, being proscribed by a superior destiny, by that fatal necessity which suffers crime to triumph, and leaves innocence to lamentation, I am doomed to die of despair, or to provoke my fate by some crime; but the penalty precedes it by much too long a time. I feel a frenzy of indignation, and hatred, which never before entered my heart *!”

* Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. iii. p 92. It is undoubtedly under the influence of such a state of mind, and with feelings first of bitter indignation and afterwards of maddening despair, that Mirabeau wrote the two following pages, the one strong, the other terrible :—

“ Despotism knows no law but violence; it would allow a rebel to be tried with impartiality much less than any other description of criminal. Its only law is force. All justice is at an end: there is no longer a citizen. A man is a mere slave; and from a slave nothing

Mirabeau, at the same time, addressed his complaints to M. Lenoir.

is due, because he has nothing of his own. A man of spirit will soon leave a country where despotism holds sway. If he is unable to do so he will soon be degraded. Whilst the mother country gives nothing, we owe her nothing, because the duties of each are reciprocal. The government vested in a single man, disposes of every other man according to his pleasure, his caprice, or his interest. From that moment every individual has a tacit right to gain as much from the sovereign as he can. If justice is rightly understood, treason cannot exist in a despotic state, because the slave can be neither a debtor nor a creditor. We cannot infringe laws and regulations in a government whose very essence is to be altogether without them. And this want of law is the vice that will destroy everything; for nothing is preserved and re-produced except by fixed and immutable laws."— *Treatise on Despotism*, page 65.

"I shall not endeavour to prove here, that it is the supreme degree of atrocity, when an attempt has been made upon a man's liberty, when he has been reduced to the despair of slavery, to punish him for what he may have done to become free, even be it excessively cruel; as if a miserable slave was not out of the pale of society, and beyond the laws which govern it, when they are powerless to protect him; as if a single law existed for him; as if nature and justice required that he should respect the life of one who disregards all that ought to belong to him; as if the satellites, the tools of oppression, were not as culpable in his sight as the oppressor himself; as if everything, I say **EVERYTHING**, without exception, was not lawful for a man to use in order to break his fetters! Know, all of you, whoever you may be, that you have two sets of weights and measures: you place all the duties in one scale, all the rights in the other; you sell the morals, the justice, and the freedom of the human species; you pretend not to know that a man is often culpable, ay, most culpable in obeying you. The greatest crime a man can commit towards himself and his fellow-creatures, is to execute the mandates of a government which,

“ The regulations of this place are so excessively—I was near saying, so cruelly severe, that I am sure to die if I remain here any longer. I have no society whatever. The very turnkey who attends to us is enjoined not to remain longer in our dungeons than is required to satisfy our wants, and not to speak of anything else. We are allowed one hour out of the twenty-four for walking ; the rest of the time we are alone with grief, and deprived of all literary resources. We have but few books, and these are bad. We experience endless delays in the gratification of our most innocent wishes and our most simple wants; delays enforced by the forms required to obtain the slightest favour. No musical instrument of any kind is allowed to be in our possession. In a word, every recreation, every solace is taken from us with the most studied cruelty. This is but a feeble sketch of our situation. All these precautions, which it may be necessary to observe with certain prisoners, are most unnecessarily cruel towards him who is only persecuted by his family. You must admit that a man who possesses a mind and some spirit, cannot withstand this kind of life, in which his talents, his knowledge, his feelings even the most praiseworthy,

by depriving him of the free exercise of his will, his opinions, and his conscience, may at any time place crime among the number of his duties. Know, that a despot, a gaoler, and a slave-dealer, are three beings devoted by nature and justice to the dagger of him whom they enslave, if the latter have the least chance of breaking his fetters at such a price.”—*Lettres de Cachet*, vol. i. p. 269.

instead of yielding him the smallest relief, are made to concur in his destruction *.”

The severity of the prisoner's confinement was however somewhat mitigated by M. Lenoir's humanity, and Boucher's active sympathy. Mirabeau felt the more obliged for this, because Boucher had already suffered for his kindness, charges having been brought against him on account of this kindness, which might have proved his ruin.

“ You have been able to understand us, good angel; you have put more faith in me than in my enemies, and what is even more, than in a false friend, a man for whom I would have laid down my life, and for whom my life has been exposed †—a man whose ingratitude and treachery are an instance of the lowest state of degradation to which our species can be brought. Man is a singular compound, at once so strong and so weak, so sublime and so base ‡. My mind is now at

* Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. ii. p. 386.

† Brianson, whom we have already mentioned.

‡ Five years subsequently, whilst Mirabeau was writing on the 13th of October 1784, to Chamfort, the same thoughts occurred to him.

“ Alas ! my friend ! you and Tacitus will then always be right ? Man is a strange mixture of levity and perversity, whom we are bound to serve, and would willingly love ; who counts the stars, subdues the elements, defies and combats all the powers of nature, and can do anything but conduct himself and his equals. He has found everything save liberty and peace ; he has been able to confer and endure authority, but can neither direct nor second it. He can cringe, but is unable to obey ; he can revolt, but is unable to

ease. Your conduct is guided by the workings of a heart so full of that noble confidence which a man derives from self-contentment and habitual virtue, that it has even made me shed tears. Yes! you may trust to my honour! you may rely on my integrity. None but a virtuous man ventures to rely upon the virtuous; and my conscience, that secret comforter, whose voice is louder than that of the crowd, and even of fame, and which, regardless of praise or reproach, overcomes every thing, tells me that I deserve the good opinion you entertain of me*!"

"Read my letter to M. Lenoir and the one to Sophie †, and judge whether my requests, my wishes, and my feelings are not just. Am I buying books whilst Sophie earns her daughter's subsistence at the

defend himself; he can love, but cannot become attached. In short, he is imbued with all the contradictions of good and evil.

* * * * *

Good God! in what actions have I detected those who were most eloquent on the subject of friendship!"—*Letter to Chamfort*, p. 59.

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated March 11th 1779. Mirabeau transposes part of this letter to that inserted in vol. iii. p. 54 of the *Correspondence from Vincennes*. The second part of the sentence, "that secret comforter," &c., which is borrowed from Seneca (de Benef. b. iv. p. 21.) is likewise placed at the end of p. 87 of the "*Lettres de Cachet*." We find in the same work, p. 33, this fine definition of conscience, of which the latter part is borrowed from Cicero (Tuscul. II. 30.):—"Justice is the natural voice of the soul, and there is no grander theatre for virtue than conscience."

† Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. iv. p. 93.

sacrifice of her rest! The very thought drives me mad! Alas! have they not made this amiable woman already suffer quite enough on my account?—and must I still be goaded by remorse? In the name of all that is dear to you, if I am allowed, and I can hardly bring my mind to believe any thing to the contrary, to give up half of my six hundred francs to assist in my daughter's maintenance, I beg you will keep back and remit that sum as my quarters become due. I entreat of you this new favour. Allow me to assist at least the unhappy Sophie, and to discharge this sacred debt *!"

Though M. Boucher's forbearance daily increased, Sophie attempted to conceal from his inspection some particulars which she wrote with lemon-juice or sympathetic ink on separate sheets. Whether it was the unusual blanks and the whiteness of those sheets that excited suspicion, or mere chance, we know not, but the deception was detected, and M. Boucher wrote :—

“ The cover has been blackened near the fire. The good angel thought he had only occasion to use his eyes. But should he be forced to abstain from reading

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated March 14th 1779. See also the Letters from Vincennes, vol. iii. p. 56. and the following. Subsequently Mirabeau had again occasion to renew his entreaties concerning this matter. See the Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. iv. p. 93.

what is most interesting, the good angel would be obliged to become a devil, especially as the questions and answers are at variance with the peace of the interested parties*.”

Mirabeau, being rather at a loss, endeavoured to answer him the same day in a note, to which he vainly attempted to give an amusing turn. On the day following he wrote, in a more serious style—

“ I will not say to you, like Vendôme :—

Vous avez mis la mort dans mon cœur outragé,

but I will tell you that you have truly given me pain, and that you have it quite in your power to leave me a prey to profound melancholy. You need only make me believe that you still think of this piece of folly. I beg however to assure you that I am much more grieved at your having suspected me of being capable of betraying your confidence, than at having lost the favour of a man from whom I derive the only comfort of my life. Your friendship and esteem are much more valuable to me than your services. This has not always been the case, but it is most assuredly so at present. I repeat to you, that you shall have no further occasion to complain. If you had, I should be inexcusable. Give me back your confidence, therefore, and tell me that you are

* Unpublished letter from M. Boucher to Mirabeau, dated March 31st 1779. We find in the Letters from Vincennes, vol. iii. p. 134, some allusion to this just and kind reprimand.

attached to me, should it even deprive me, for three months, of my Sophie's correspondence. The punishment would certainly exceed the offence*!"

The accuracy, which we make it our duty to observe, would perhaps require that we should here notice a project of reconciliation between Sophie and her husband; for it has been too often mentioned in the publications which have preceded ours, especially in the correspondence from Vincennes, to admit of our passing it over in silence. But this circumstance, which is purely incidental, can only be explained in detail, and would interrupt our narrative for too long a time. Therefore, though these particulars are mostly unpublished, we transfer them to the Appendix of the present volume. Whatever Mirabeau may have said in the good faith of his passion †, Sophie's letters mostly offer but a slender interest when they do not convey the expression of very energetic feelings. For this reason we have been sparing in our extracts; but as we wish to honour this noble victim of love, we transcribe one affecting passage.

“ Love surely adds immensely to parental tenderness! We dote so much upon whatever proceeds from the object of our affection! How would it be possible for us not to cherish his children, who form a part of himself? Of

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated April 1st 1779.

† Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. ii. p. 81.

all the crimes which excite the greatest horror, none is more dreadful than that of the wretched females who destroy or expose their offspring, and are able to survive such a deed. The Confessor, who allowed his fair penitent to expose hers, if she kissed it thrice, had probably been a father, and knew how strongly we are attached to our children. No animals exist which abandon their young; yet most of them know not the father of their offspring. They love them, therefore, for their own sake. If any one steal to enrich himself, it is an easy road to wealth; there is but one step more to assassination: but to kill a poor infant, which we owe to the tenderness of the man we love, and this to save a pretended reputation, is a thing I shall never be able to conceive *!"

Mirabeau's burning temperament made him sometimes forget to observe the necessary caution in a correspondence liable to come under official inspection. Boucher reprimands him for it with kindness.

"I confess that if I were so much in love as you are, and as I have been, I might perhaps do the same thing; but it is necessary we should inform you that the three first pages of your letter exceed the limits of our forbearance, and that if it were unfor-

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated April 15th 1779.

tunately intercepted, we should be accused of aiding and abetting seduction * !”

Mirabeau replied:

“ Alas ! what you say is but too well founded. How just is your slow prudence ; it is far preferable to my turbulent precipitation, and violent thoughtlessness ! How persevering and enlightened is your zeal, and how affecting your indulgence † !”

After waiting four months, Mirabeau obtained permission to see Dupont, in private.

“ Yes, good angel, amiable keeper ! my mind is calm and my heart content, and always moved by your inexhaustible kindness. What good have you not done me during the last ten days !”

“ But I know not why I thank you for the new and very important favour of seeing Dupont in private. M. de Rougemont ‡ told me this morning, before I had opened my parcel, that it was he (Rougemont) who had solicited and obtained this permission from M. Lenoir. Do you not therefore see that I must thank M. de Rougemont alone ? Oh ! how ungrateful I am !

“ He told me that he had heard from M. Boucher, (do you by chance know him) that he had been writing

* Unpublished letter from M. Boucher to Mirabeau, dated May 4th 1779.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated May 7th 1779.

‡ Commandant of the Castle of Vincennes.

to me, in answer to my question, whether my letter to my father* had been given to Dupont. This concerns me; for you will easily conceive that it is quite impossible I should give Dupont instructions concerning my affairs with the same precision whilst I am speaking to him in prison, as I could do by making him read that paper, in which I state every thing, and anticipate every kind of objection, quite confident as I am that none can be offered †.

“With regard to what I stated to you that Dupont was in the secret of my correspondence with Sophie, what I am about to tell is all I know, as he did not explain himself clearly, because Vallage‡ happened to be present. I spoke to him of the obligations I was under to M. Lenoir and yourself. I told him that, to say all in one word, you had saved my life.

“‘I know it,’ was his reply.

“‘And do you know on what occasion?’

“‘Yes! and it has afforded me much satisfaction §.’”

* Justification addressed by Mirabeau to his father, “Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes,” vol. i. p. 287.

† We have already mentioned, and again call the reader’s attention to the declaration which Mirabeau makes respecting this most true, or perhaps the only true, document hitherto published concerning his youth.

‡ The King’s Lieutenant (lieutenant-de-roi) of the Castle of Vincennes.

§ Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated May 16th 1779.

Of all Sophie's causes of grief, the one she felt the most was her separation from her child.

"What the good angel has told me concerning my daughter's teeth, grieves me much, for it is a dangerous time for children! I can no longer bear those of other people. To see them have their child, whilst I am deprived of mine, irritates me so much that it makes me quite unreasonable, and agonises my mind. When I am thus affected, as at this moment, every thing but you becomes most disagreeable. I am out of temper with every thing. I would destroy every thing, and offer up as a holocaust to yourself all that belongs not to you or me. But far different from Jephtha, I would except my daughter *!"

In reference to this same letter, Mirabeau wrote some time after:—

"Believe me, the poor creature suffers in proportion to her courage; but her anger quiets me. The noble and gloomy accents of restrained grief would alarm me much more than her exclamations and her rage.

* * * * *

"Malicious, twofold malicious spirit, who refuseth me tidings of my child and its mother. I write to scold, to conjure, to exorcise thee:—or rather incarnate devil, under the form of an angel, remember that I am weary

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated May 10th 1779.

of a fortnight's celibacy. You take Sophie's letters to yourself, or you have some of them written to you at my expense. Restore me then my property, or I shall hate you. May heaven perpetuate your want of feeling, O most phlegmatic Picard! and may love preserve me from it. Adieu, I hate you as much as I am able. It is really a most difficult task, but I try to do it *."

Mirabeau could not refrain from alluding to the treatment he experienced in the Donjon of Vincennes:—

"I possess many proofs of your indulgence. I daily receive marks of your kindness. Read the enclosed; weigh each word; and make also this effort for an unfortunate being worthy of a better fate. Do lose even half a day and afford me an hour's private conversation in my room. I assure you that both your own justice and that of the worthy magistrate I invoke, are at stake. Come and receive the effusions of an honest heart, which is half broken, but full of tender feelings towards you †."

Mirabeau was subjected to every sort of privation. He was even distressed for clothes; though much more alive to the wants of the mind than to those of the body. He sometimes expressed himself warmly con-

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated June 21st 1779.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated June 19th 1779.

cerning his state of destitution, which was of such a nature, that we have not the same courage to describe it that was shown by another biographer*. It may suffice, that we refer the reader for those details to the letters from the Donjon at Vincennes†. It was not, however, parental harshness alone which deprived him of clothes, linen, and the books he wanted, for he had both books and clothes in the trunks brought back from Holland; but those trunks furnished, at first, matter for strange inquiry, and his father wrote on that occasion ‡:—

“ I replied that, this man, who was interdicted at Paris, had a decree passed against him in Provence, and had been condemned in Franche-Comté, possessed none of the rights which belong to a citizen; and it was strange that the authorities wished to acknowledge that he had rights, whilst the law refused him any §. But can you conceive that they will not deliver those trunks up to me? I had concerning them a rather sharp answer from M. de Maurepas. We are surely forgotten with a vengeance, both we and our ancestors,

* Peuchet, vol. i. p. 266, and following.

† Vol. i. pp. 45, 126; vol. ii. pp. 28, 39—41; vol. iii. pp. 46, 93, 158, 436, 580; vol. iv. pp. 150, 165.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 3rd 1777.

§ Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis du Saillant, dated November 11th 1777.

that people presume to haggle and curtail our authority, when we confine our own offspring *."

We have already spoken of the condescension, in the first instance humane, afterwards friendly and benevolent, which Mirabeau experienced,—we do not say from the head of his family, who always refused him a cold impartiality, and even common justice, but from the authorities invested with the enforcement of rigour, the full weight of which it was hoped he would feel. No doubt he did not always immediately obtain all that his state of destitution required. No doubt also, that the more he obtained, the more eager he became, and the oftener he complained of the severe regulations to which he was subjected, and against which he sometimes protested with vehement bitterness†: nevertheless he obtained a great deal. He received, for instance, the portrait‡ of his unfortunate child, whom he loved most tenderly, with whose health, education, and future prospects he was continually occupied, and whom he was doomed to lose, without ever having seen the poor babe. He was even authorised to have his bust modelled, and sent to Sophie, who wrote to him on that occasion:—

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated February 15th 1780.

† Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. i. p. 125 ; vol. ii. p. 27.

‡ The same, vol. i. p. 250.

“What a fine thing is a signature, which brings us busts by post! But it is not you; and whatever is not you, is nothing but a bust to Sophie *!”

These are, surely, we must confess, very strange concessions “in the eye of prejudice †.”

The mutual passion of the lovers, their anxiety about their child, and about the health of each other, their wants, their privations; the confidence of their wishes and illusions, their recollections and their hopes, their grief and their joy; the perseverance, the ability, the vigour, and the dignity, which Mirabeau displayed in his efforts to better their condition and obtain either their liberty or a judicial trial; the vast labours of every kind which always constituted his usual occupations and the solace of his life, and were now his only resource, developing and increasing his prodigious faculties, and preparing him for his future career:—these are the only facts to be found in the hundred and thirty letters, which compose Manuel’s

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated April 24th 1780.

† These expressions have been already quoted, as contained in a letter from Mirabeau, inserted in Manuel’s collection, vol. iii. p. 111. It was a direct favour from M. Lenoir (see the Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. ii. p. 87.); and Mirabeau valued it the more, because it had in the first instance been refused. See the same volume, p. 111. The portrait of little Sophie Gabrielle was afterwards sent to Mirabeau by M. Lenoir. See same volume, p. 250.

collection *. These facts are simply personal, and their interest, generally of an ephemeral nature, has been more lasting and become immortal, merely on account of the fame which the principal person to whom they relate subsequently acquired; and especially, on account of the ingenious diversity, ardent passion, and bitter and pathetic eloquence, both serious and picturesque, which always work upon the reader's mind, without the excitement ever flagging, during this long and monotonous succession of protests, complaints, entreaties, and endless repetitions.

But what still more essentially distinguishes this collection from all others, and identifies it with Mirabeau more closely than any author was ever identified with his work, is the incomparable power of the writer; the inexhaustible store of tenderness always alive in a heart which, even in its rage, is incapable of harbouring hatred or revenge †; that bold language, sometimes angry, always vehement, of

* Of those hundred and thirty letters, sixty-nine were addressed to Sophie, forty-four to M. Lenoir, and seventeen to different individuals, such as the Marquis of Mirabeau, the king, the ministers, &c.

† "Such a feeling is quite foreign to my heart, to that burning heart which has undoubtedly led me to commit my errors, as it also made my happiness and grief, but which I would tear out with my own hands if I did not feel equally incapable of prostrating the weak and cringing to oppressors."—*Third Case for Counsel's Opinion, against the Marquis of Monnier*, p. 9.

a man free even in captivity ; that innate, tenacious, and implacable hatred which he displays against despotism ; that warm philanthropy, and vigilant patriotism that always made him look to the public good, even in his own particular cause* ; and lastly, that peculiar organisation, that singular result, that unparalleled action of nature and study, of temper and fate, which raised a poor and infirm prisoner to a great statesman, and called forth from the horrors of a dungeon the restorer of the liberties of his country !

After this recapitulation, the accuracy of which has long since been proclaimed by the unanimous opinion of competent judges, we no longer require the letters from Vincennes. Though we have borrowed but in a comparatively small degree from them, we feel loth to increase our extracts. All the rest, consisting of

* “ When the injustice which is submitted to public opinion, that tribunal which tries all judges, all the great of the earth, affects individual liberty, the most valuable property of a citizen, in one word, the most eminent of the rights of human nature, the repugnance which a man, endowed with any modesty, feels to trouble others with his private affairs, must yield to the duty of saying, maintaining, and proclaiming any useful truth to the defence of which his situation calls him. In such a case, every one can and ought to consider himself the defender of society ; and he should then view his own cause as that of all his fellow-citizens.” P. 3. of the Notice that precedes the Statement by the Count of Mirabeau, suppressed at the moment of its publication, by special order of the Keeper of the Seals, and re-published from respect for the king and justice ; with a conversation on the subject, between the Keeper of the Seals and the Count of Mirabeau. 1784, 1 vol. 8vo.

development of character, sketches, narratives, theories, and controversies, which for the last forty years have been public property, we must, in repeating what has already been read by every one, confine our quotations as much as possible to cases of absolute necessity, either to complete a picture, or to do our duty by giving faithful delineations. We therefore take entire leave of the correspondence from Vincennes, and hasten to relate that which we have been obliged to defer: namely, the circumstances which, after many difficulties and delays, terminated Mirabeau's captivity. These particulars we shall gather only from our own unpublished materials.

Fifteen months after the commencement of his captivity, a domestic event, tending to procure the prisoner's release, had long been working a change, if not in the Marquis's heart, at any rate in his resolves. It originated in a personal motive springing from the pride of ancestry, and the love of having his name perpetuated. Thus then there was some chance of deliverance, which, in truth, was still deferred twenty-seven months, and would, perhaps, never have been obtained by Mirabeau's entreaties, nor by the justice of the case, nor indeed by public interference, from the inexorable father, with whom ministers had hitherto been blindly associated.

BOOK VIII.

By his wife Mirabeau had a son, whose features, character, and surprising faculties are equally extolled in the letters we possess. That child died October 8th 1778, the day on which it had attained its fifth year. That the father loved it tenderly, the letters from Vincennes furnish abundant proof*; for parental affection was one of the finest virtues of that great mind, whose natural tenderness had been greatly increased by misfortune. Sophie herself bears witness to it; and we may conceive how much the situation in which both the lovers were placed at the time of the effusions to which she refers, adds weight to a testimony so honourable to both.

“ O my friend ! we are then no longer in possession of our child, for I considered your son as mine. With what pleasure would I have been a mother to him ! I but too plainly perceive your grief, though you

* See particularly vol. i. p. 14; vol. ii. pp. 115, 379; vol. iii. pp. 219, 237; vol. iv. p. 329. See also *Statements concerning Pontarlier*; *Lettres de Cachet*, vol. ii. p. 99; *Papers from Provence*, &c.

attempt to disguise it. I know but too well how much you loved him ; I remember how tenderly you spoke of him in the days of our happiness * ! ”

The death of this child plunged the family into deep dejection.

“ I write you only a line, my dear brother, but a most distressing one. Your house is annihilated by the death of our poor child. Victor died the day before yesterday (the 8th), this being the day on which he had attained his fifth year. God gave him to us, and God has taken him away. For some time past, God has made me feel his great mercy by granting me resignation to his will †.”

“ I am informed,” replied the Marquis, “ of the death of our child, the last hope of our race. I have hitherto

* Original Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. iv, p. 329. We abstain from giving unnecessary particulars concerning this child ; and hereafter we shall merely mention him very incidentally. We here transcribe a fragment, in which the Bailli gives an interesting account of him.

“ The poor little creature would not have been like the madman who procreated him. In him reason and mildness seemed clothed and incarnate. It was never necessary, in any matter of moment, to tell him the same thing twice. He one day asked why his father was in prison. His mother told him that a son should not speak of his father if he had nothing good to say of him, and that being in prison was not good. No one ever heard the poor child speak any more of his father, whilst he constantly enquired after his grandfather Mirabeau.”—*Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 13th 1778.*

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated October 10th 1778.

thought I inherited from my mother a mind incapable of strong emotion. I had succeeded in resisting and smothering all the internal volcanoes which can unsettle a man exempt from remorse. God wished to undeceive me, by this last dispensation he wished to wean me from earth. I could not refrain from asking him, with more sobs than I ever uttered in all my life, either to call me to immediate judgment, or to grant me another conscience that might unfold the crimes by which I have deserved so heavy a burthen of misfortune. I have endeavoured to be a good son, a good brother, a good husband, a good father, and a good neighbour; to be honest in my dealings, and accommodating. I never did ~~nor~~ wished to do injury to a human being. I seem however to be an especial object of Heaven's wrath. After having for a long time repelled the cruel feeling of being an object of pity to myself, I have fallen into another, even more distressing, namely, self-disgust *!"

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated October 21st 1778.

It was thought in the family, and we ourselves can attest, that Mesdames de Cabris and du Saillant, who survived this event, the one twenty-nine, the other forty-four years, always said that Mirabeau's child had been poisoned by collaterals, who never ceased to covet the mother's inheritance, and in some measure forced her in 1783 to sue for a divorce. Mirabeau believed it, as may be seen in the Letters from Vincennes, vol. iii. pp. 220, 237, 297. It will surely not be expected that we should furnish evidence of this crime, which could not be found should the supposition be true.

Victor's mother was inconsolable.

"Poor Marignane wrote me a letter which proves

But, to explain this family tradition since published, we have extracted several passages from the letters of the Marquis of Mirabeau. Before he was even made acquainted with the event, he wrote:—

"I have received a letter from my daughter-in-law, with notes from her father, informing me of very serious accidents that have befallen my grandson. Notwithstanding all the assurances which press upon me, and the arguments of Doctor Santi to prove that he is troubled with worms or spasms, I infer no good from it; and my old age has so much been inured to the thought of all possible horrors, that I can scarcely abstain from recollecting the recommendations, long since repeated, and addressed to me from the very country, not to leave so precious a child in a place where his prospects might mar those of others."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated October 17th 1778.*

He had written two years before:—

"I should be more afraid if we were condemned to such thoughts, that the life of that child might stand in the way of collaterals, against whom anonymous letters attempt to excite my suspicions."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 30th 1776.*

Finally, six months after the event, he again wrote:—

"I all at once hear that my grandson, my only hope, the hope of my house and my ancestors, a child of singular promise from his kindness of heart and powers of mind, is taken ill, and has a pain in his stomach that makes him utter cries, and produces convulsions. Must I tell you all my dear friend? Infamous anonymous letters had long before informed me that I was leaving that child too long in a country where he was the only obstacle to great expectations of people in bad repute. As it has pleased God, in my old age, this book of human horrors, which I never should have known, has been but too well unfolded to me. The first intelligence I received informed me that my grandson was not in danger; but I inferred evil from it. The next post apprised me of his

his affliction *. Emily is in gloomy despair. I yesterday saw this poor mother arrive at Mirabeau. She was taken ill as soon as she entered, and I felt

death! The first moment was cruel. During five years I have resisted the feeling of being an object of pity to myself. It would be necessary to recollect all that I must have suffered, to force my nature, feelings, and even vanity, so as to accustom myself to tear away a veil which I had held for thirty years with so much anguish, and with it covered all my wounds; to relish public scandal, the opprobrium cast upon my name, calumny; to haunt at my time of life the ante-chambers of judges, ministers, secretaries, commissioners, exempts, and ever so many more, and to have to pick up and gather all kinds of horrors and all sorts of stigmas! What a sacrifice to the inheritance of my venerable ancestors! What an end to a career ambitious of esteem! It is therefore not surprising if I have sometimes felt tempted to pity myself. But the moment I received this new dispensation of Providence, I conceived all at once a disgust of myself."—*Unpublished letter of the Marquis of Mirabeau to Le Franc of Pompignan, dated April 26th 1779.*

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated October 10th 1778. We have several affecting letters from the Countess of Mirabeau, but extract only a single passage from them:—

"I did not wish to leave to papa the care of answering your letter. I wished to thank you for the interest you take in my afflictions. A tender mother alone can feel what I suffer since my poor Victor has been taken from me. I have lost in him not only all my hopes and the only fruit of the pain I endured, but also the most tender friend. Do not mistake my expressions for prejudice: my child was everything to me. He felt for my afflictions, and was happy only so long as he thought his mother so. I daily discovered some new seed of virtue in his soul, and no defect appeared in him. This child was also much too forward for his age, and he has been cut off prematurely to my eternal sorrow."—*Unpublished letter from the Countess of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated November 9th 1778.*

great compassion for her. She cannot bear to remain here, but wishes me to conduct her to you. Marignane had already told me, that when she was able to listen to him, he would propose her going to Paris to divert her attention. Are you not of opinion that we should take her at her word, and risk the consequences * ?”

This project pleased the Marquis, whatever might be his intentions.

“ This post has brought me a letter from my daughter-in-law ; it is long and full of feeling, depicting very naturally her situation. She tells me that she has now no other desire than to be in her poor child’s family. I was much affected at this mark of confidence, which is at least a justice done to me ; and I have answered her as I ought, and as the feeling she evinces towards me deserves *.”

The Bailli availing himself of the circumstance, tried to interest her for the prisoner.

“ Corruption has much increased, notwithstanding the outrages and indignities of those vile libels which have appeared in behalf of your wife. People continue to think you rather severe towards your child. Are you not fearful therefore that it might be whispered into this young woman’s ear, that she can no longer

* Letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 6th 1778.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 26th 1778.

reside under your roof without her husband? With regard to him, in this country with the compassion of which you are acquainted, it will be said, that his case is some irregularity; that his elopement with a woman is a youthful prank, pardonable at his time of life. For you know the morals of Babylon; it is surely the city towards which Jugurtha looked back *!"

"Let people say what they please," replied the inexorable Marquis, "but let every one do with their own madman, and with those over whom Providence has placed them, that which we do with ours, and we shall no longer hear of so many complaints and abominations. Let me moreover be accused of prejudice, of severity, of persecution, of revenge: it is in accordance with human cogitations and disputes. I laugh at it till my shoulders shake; but I live at a time when praise is to be obtained only by some folly or crime. I know that we are here below exposed to iniquity, and should we not be able to defend ourselves, we have as it were given up the hammer, and are absolutely nothing more than an anvil. Consequently, I am more stiff in my old muscles than

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated November 26th 1778. The last sentence is an allusion to the celebrated saying of Jugurtha, mentioned by Sallust:—"Sed postquam Româ egressus est, fertur, sæpe tacitus eo respiciens, postremo dixisse: URBEM VENALEM, ET MATURE PERITURAM, SI EMPTOREM INVENIRET."

firm on my legs, and I constantly strive to hold converse with my soul. I daily submit my plans to Providence; for I have always been of opinion that human impatience and affections are attempts at revolt, paltry imitations of the crime of Satan; and that in earthly justice and good fame, as in youth, health, riches, power, and duration, all human regret is a mere spite at not being God. Finally, after having daily sounded and cleansed my heart, in His presence, I feel but the more bent on persisting, and I say unto myself, ‘If you mistake, and your project is unjust, Providence, which sees clearer, will bring it to nought *.’”

Unfortunately, the bereaved mother was unable to execute her project of going to Paris.

“Your unhappy daughter-in-law is on the eve of sustaining another afflicting loss. In compliance with your letter of the 17th, she was about to leave with the intention of joining you, when Marignane received intelligence that the Count of Valballe was dying, having been given over. He and the Count are very intimate friends. Poor Marignane burst into tears, and is in despair. You may imagine that Emily cannot leave her father at such a moment, and I should even have opposed her doing so †.”

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated December 7th 1778.

† Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mira-

The Marquis was easily reconciled to this change of purpose.

“ I did not much calculate upon it, and I expected them with as much interest and impatience as I should look for an itinerary of the swallows in spring. Besides, I cannot help it. These four words have proved a balm to me through life; and if they had come, I could not have helped laughing whilst thinking how much my tongue and my jawbone would

beau, dated November 23rd 1778. In two letters from the Countess of Mirabeau, we find the fact confirmed which had so great an influence over her husband's destiny.

“ I feel most painfully the overthrow of all my projects, and being deprived of seeing my father-in-law and yourself. It is the only thing I wish for at present. Providence has not willed that it should be so. Another misfortune has fallen upon my poor father. He experiences a serious loss by being deprived of his friend. I am necessary to console him, and I sacrifice myself entirely to the attempt to be useful to him. To-morrow I am going to confine myself at Marignane, with the women who were attached to the unfortunate Count of Valbelle. I shall now be occupied in finding a favourable opportunity to repair my present loss; for I can by no means renounce the pleasure of seeing my adopted family.”—*Unpublished letter from the Countess of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated November 26th 1778.*

“ I was in hopes of seeing you this year; but, when I spoke of it to papa, he objected to it, and expressed a wish that I should remain with him. I have lost the favourable moment, but cannot reproach myself for it, as I remained only that I might be of service to him, in his affliction at the loss of M. de Valbelle. I have therefore merely done my duty by sacrificing to him one of my fondest wishes.”—*Letter from the Countess of Mirabeau to Madame du Saillant, dated August 10th 1779.*

have rendered me a worthy legatee of the Court of Love *."

This event, and some months later, the Count of Valbelle's death, prevented the intended journey, which, after all, perhaps would not have produced much good, if we may judge from the Marquis of Mirabeau's declaration.

"As to the inmate of Vincennes, independently of the crimes which a man never shakes off, he has innate extravagance; and such is the bent of his mind, that, if he had not committed any thing wrong, it would still be expedient to put him out of the way †.

"Supposing even his public crimes not to have occurred, I know him to be not only impious and wicked, and this not owing to any physical defect, but to be naturally a fool. Even St. Paul's conversion, which would change any other man, could not remodel this fellow. It is not therefore in my power to commit a cruelty through vanity, and to recouple such a personage, and thereby stitch the castle of Marignane on to the castle of Mirabeau ‡."

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 26th 1778. *The Court of Love* is an allusion to the numerous and brilliant society, of ladies in particular, which continually assembled at the Count of Valbelle's magnificent mansion at Aix and at the Castle of Tourbes.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 10th 1778.

‡ Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated November 28th 1778.

The Bailli, on the other hand, seemed resigned.

“For my part, the dejection into which our misfortune has thrown us, does not prevent me from acknowledging that, considering the times, the loss of morals, and all that a thoughtless and unbridled age such as ours forebodes to posterity, I can scarcely feel compassion for an extinct race when it had been composed of only good and virtuous noblemen *. I could therefore wish you were as resigned as I am respecting postero-mania †.”

Nevertheless, he was secretly endeavouring to prevail upon Mirabeau to make concessions to his father. Knowing the interest M. Boucher took in the prisoner, the Bailli wrote to that gentleman. The first measures were taken at the end of May 1779. On the 2nd of June, Boucher wrote to Mirabeau in the following terms:—

“Your friend, who does not give his name, having observed to me, that it might appear strange to your father to receive a letter from you, I this morning had a letter signed by the magistrate (M. Lenoir) to accompany your own ‡.”

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 13th 1778.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated December 29th 1778.

‡ Unpublished letter from M. Boucher to Mirabeau, dated June 2nd 1779.

On the other hand, the Marquis wrote on the following day :—

“ Yesterday I received a letter from M. Lenoir, who informs me that whilst he was visiting the prisoners, he saw my son, who begged that he might be permitted to write to me, to you, and to his wife ; that he could not refuse him, &c. Had I been affected or even slightly moved by this letter, it would not have had the remotest effect upon my way of thinking, nor induced me to change the line of conduct which is permanently decided upon in my soul and conscience, and which I shall pursue, at all events, towards this personage, because every thing is founded upon the conviction, after mature reflection, that such is my duty. But the letter has done neither the one nor the other, and I leave him upon the dunghill of his crimes *.”

Who would imagine, on reading this harsh language, that the same man wrote, on the same day, in the same letter, and just as naturally :—

“ My poor vassals suffer a great deal at this season of the year, when a dearth is to be expected, and after such a dreadful winter ! When one sees the poor devils come from a league off, in such weather, and ask, as a favour, to propel a wheelbarrow for ten sous a day, we can only thank God for having placed us in a situation to give them this sum, and consider a

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 3rd 1779.

very serious fault, every thing that prevents us from making such use of our means, especially with my public and private principles *."

Who would also imagine that, at the same period, the Marquis experienced misfortunes which would have softened any other temper but his? His friend Lefranc of Pompignan fell dangerously ill, and the Marchioness obtained a judgment against him. These events threw him into an extraordinary state of dejection. A few days previously, he had written as follows :—

"It is not the testimony of man that I seek ; it is not their justice that I am eager for:—but if my existence is a burthen to me, what would it be to others? Surrounded with crimes ; the mother, and four out of five children imprisoned ; wreck of name, wreck of fortune, wreck of friends—what can I feel within myself that could secure me against the dispensations of Providence which leave me so long in the tun of Regulus?

"If these are mere reverses, they are the lot of all men ; but if they suppose a wrong side, I never had one. My house descended to me in a flourishing, healthy state, unincumbered with debts or lawsuits, fragrant with honour and dignity—an object of general esteem. In what a state is it now ? Let us go no farther ; but

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 3rd 1779.

you must feel how and wherefore my inward conscience calls for witnesses. Those are to be regretted who could have shown that my youth was timid and willing, my mature age painful and constant. If in my subsidiary labours, subordinate to my natural duties *, I am one of those who have called out from the top of the minaret, I did so for the good of all, without, on the other hand, ever having sought that unfortunate celebrity which is the only thing now left to me, and which, if I valued it, I should now have to divide with all the impious and the mad. At no period of my life was I ever vain or wicked †."

We have just stated that the Marquis had received a letter from his son; let us examine what this letter was, which had been preceded by an imprisonment of two years, and which, coming from the pen of such a man, had failed in "affecting" or even "slightly moving" an irritated father; a letter on the subject of which Mirabeau wrote the same day:

"Here is the letter which has cost me a bad night, though no pain; for the recollection of a father always excites one's feelings, and I wrote it without making a rough copy. How eased does my heart feel since I have written it ‡!"

* Allusion to his works on Political Economy.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated July 5th 1779.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the dated July 5th 1779.

“ My dear father, I feel it both a duty and a necessity to solicit your pardon for my faults, and from the bottom of my heart I bitterly regret the pain they have occasioned you. I have no right to say to you: erase from your memory my numerous errors, a great portion of which I humbly trust I have expiated by so many years of continued misfortune and dreadful captivity. This is not sufficient, I confess ; and to obtain that favour from you, it would be necessary, were it possible, to offer a reparation. But, my father, is this possible, in my present situation? Will you deny me even the hope of recovering, at least in part, the rights which nature has given to me, upon your heart, and of resuming those sacred duties she has imposed upon me towards you? My father, I am far from desiring to excuse myself. I wrote to you, on the contrary, with the conscience of a guilty man, who accuses himself, and begs for mercy from his judge. Do not deny it to me, I beseech you, and allow me to say that you ought not to refuse it: for whatever may have been the expression of my resentment, that very crime has given me a claim upon your generosity and a right to your pardon, since it has rendered my offence personal to yourself. But, I swear, in all the sincerity of my heart, really not depraved, that the severity which I have no doubt wrongly interpreted, and of which I fancied I had a right to complain, has never driven from my bosom the affection and respect I owe to you;

that I have never entertained the thought of taking part against you in the lamentable lawsuit that has divided and mutilated our family.

“ My father, you say, and think that I am a madman. If I am one, I have at least a claim upon your pity, and my situation is cruel in the extreme. But I am not mad, although I have been guilty of the greatest follies. Two years of solitude have enabled me to search into the recesses of my heart, which is good, though impetuous. My mind is composed of good and evil. It is my imagination, fervid, fiery, and unsteady, which has caused my errors, my faults, and my misfortunes. The former man no longer exists; but were he still the same, a benefit, such as that which would restore me to your presence and to existence, would bind him to you for ever.

“ My father, you do not believe that I am wicked. If I were so, I might say to you : ‘ no man possesses a right of rendering those unhappy, whom he cannot render good.’ But, Heaven be praised ! I am not wicked. I promise you, nay, I swear, that my most ardent wish is to make amends for the sorrow I have occasioned you, and that I will never increase its measure. If I violate this oath, I shall not retain the slightest claim to the indulgence of any one, and you will assuredly be justified in casting me off for ever. If you do not look upon me as the most wicked and insensate of men, you may then be convinced

of the sincerity of this confession of my errors, and that of my resolutions. Consult your own heart, my father, and deign to tell me if it still dictates your son's proscription *."

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his father, dated May 28th 1779. Mirabeau ended this pathetic letter with an Italian sonnet, no less affecting, and which we insert here:—

“ Padre, che pur sei padre, ancor che offeso,
 E l'antica pietà spenta non hai ;
 Ma spiacque a te di giusto sdegno acceso
 Sempre la colpa, il peccator non mai.
 Gravando ognor sulle tue spalle il peso,
 Se contre il ciel sugli occhi tuoi peccai
 Io nol dirò ch' indarno a te il paleso,
 Che il tutto vedi, onde pur troppo il sai.
 Diro bensi, che già gran tempo io sono
 Indegno che tuo figlio altri mi chiami ;
 E più non merto a falli miei perdono.
 Ma, di tua carità sono i legami
 Cotanto in se tenaci, e tu sì buono,
 Che ingrati ancora il figli tuoi pur ami.”

He added a translation of this sonnet.

“ Gentleman amateurs,” he wrote to Boucher and Dupont, both of them excelling in, and passionately fond of, music, “ if you do not understand Italian sufficiently to guess the meaning of this sonnet, the following is a translation of it, or at least nearly so ; but it does not give the elegance, the harmony, and the conciseness of the original, which is a prayer addressed to the Almighty.

“ ‘ Oh Father ! Thou art ever a Father, although offended ; and hast not exhausted thy former mercy, for thy just wrath is ever kindled against the crime, and not against the criminal. If, continually increasing the weight of my errors, which thou hast taken upon thyself, I sin against heaven, I will not tell it to thee, for the confession is useless to thee who seest everything, and therefore knowest

This letter obtained no other reply than the following formal acknowledgment of having received it, written by the Marquis to M. Lenoir.

all. But I will say that I have long been unworthy of being called thy son, and my errors deserve no longer any pardon ; but the bonds of thy charity are so strong, and thou art so good, that thou still lovest thy ungrateful sons.'

" These ideas, in the abstract, are common-place, but the expression, in Italian, is truly charming, and I thought the application would not prove displeasing : read, gentlemen, and decide."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated May 28th 1779.*

It appears, however, that Dupont and Boucher advised the suppression of the sonnet, and Mirabeau consented to it. The following passage explains both his and their motive :—" With regard to the sonnet, I willingly accede to your opinion. It is true that verses throw a coldness over a letter, though it is not equally so that they cannot proceed from a heart strongly excited. On the contrary, the feelings must be acted upon before the mind can produce good verses. Since I have been here I have composed some music, weeping bitterly all the while ; and my music is good precisely because I wept."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated May 31st 1779.*

Mirabeau's musical recreations caused him some vexation. " I must inform you, my dear friend, that although there are others, particularly two persons, who sing all day, M. de Rougemont wants to forbid my singing, as being contrary to the discipline of a state prison. I further inform you, that I have replied that I had sung, that I still sang, and that I should continue to sing until death prevented me. It is true the ladies come to the window to listen to me ; but it is not my fault if I have a good voice, and M. Lenoir, who has had the kindness to offer me all sorts of musical instruments, does not, I presume, intend to forbid me the use of this voice. In a word, I was born, thank God, with an obstinate disposition to resist every sort of tyranny, and I shall never change."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated April 12th 1780.*

“ I have received the letter you have done me the honour of writing to me, and the one you were so kind as to inclose. I can only thank you for the trouble you have taken.”

Nevertheless, this sentence delighted the kind mediator, who did not hope for even so much. He immediately wrote to Mirabeau, in these terms :—

“ If this does not indicate satisfaction, at all events it betokens no anger, nor even ill-humour *.”

Mirabeau wrote to his uncle at the same time. We do not insert his letter, because it is little more than a repetition of the one to his father. The kind-hearted Bailli moved with pity, but checked by the superstitious respect he bore to his elder brother, knew not to which of these feelings he ought to yield.

“ For my part, I confess I am puzzled how to reply. You are a father, a title respectable and respected, at all times and in all places. I even think I have learnt from history that the manners of a country have always been more or less moral, in proportion to the influence of parental authority. But, with regard to uncles, beginning with the decalogue, they are not comprised in any law, and whatever is conceded to them is mere matter of favour, as is also what they give. Thus, I find myself much perplexed. However I am here harassed to death, and in a

* Unpublished letter from Boucher to Mirabeau, dated June 7th 1779. See the Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. iii. p. 207.

manner the more fatiguing, because it proceeds from praiseworthy feelings. I perceive that those Provençal gentry seeing one of their best and most noble-minded races on the point of being swept from the face of the earth, are in great distress. In fact, I am here, only the Evangelist; but the Evangelist says, that if the pride of that gentleman has come down so far as to have allowed him to write with his own hand what you have received, he thinks he is properly humbled, and has reflected seriously. Confinement renders a man mad; half-madmen return to their senses. I therefore am of opinion, that if his pride bends, there may be some amendment. I allow you, however, to place this among the number of gratuitous suppositions *."

The Bailli having thus timidly expressed himself, submitted to his brother's choice two models of a letter. In one, every species of assistance was refused; and we do not insert it here, because it is in the collection from Vincennes †.

The other, a very long one, was less discouraging. We extract only a few words from it.

"I am very angry with your sister ‡, who has

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated June 11th 1779.

† Vol. iii. p. 444.

‡ This alludes to a statement which Madame de Cabris had just published, defending herself against her husband's family, who disputed her right, from very injurious motives, to the guardianship of her husband, then in a state of mental alienation.

been your accomplice. It is nevertheless to that circumstance that you owe the interest I am about to take in you. I mistrust my own feelings, and as I am far from possessing that pride and presumption which have hitherto formed the basis of your character, in spite of my age and experience, if I refused my intercession for you, I should be afraid of mistaking the motive of my refusal, and that personal outrage, the bitterness of which I have severely felt, might influence my firmness in this matter *."

This assurance, so consolatory for the unfortunate captive, was still to be denied him. The Marquis thus replied to the Bailli :—

" I have rendered justice, in my capacity of natural and domestic judge, and I could see, unmoved by remorse, the mother in the pillory, and the son on the gallows tree! I should, nevertheless, carry my head erect, and my bosom bare. Thus, for my part, every thing is settled. With regard to others, his outrageous mother, who is strongly urged to come to some arrangement, always puts forward that her worthy offspring must first be restored to freedom.

" Thus, there is nothing yet to be done in the business. With regard to his wife, I have always said, and thought, that she alone could do any thing, as she

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to his nephew, joined to one addressed to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated June 11th 1779.

alone has a right. God forbid that I should reason upon all this. My mind is made up: I will neither act nor advise in the business. Such is my decision. As for what concerns yourself, you know better how to act than I do, and can act more firmly; but I pass judgment only upon the two letters which you have submitted, in some degree, to my approval. I shall keep them until I see whether any letters come from the Countess; in which case I will send the shortest of yours, because it places you more out of the business than otherwise. But if no letters arrive, I shall keep both, as I do not think it proper that this negociation should involve you*.”

Another mediator presented himself, partly solicited by Mirabeau, and partly induced by another party, as will presently appear.

“ This winter, they † applied to Dupont ‡. A letter

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 20th 1779.

“ I have simply forwarded your short letter and that of the Countess to M. Lenoir.”—*Letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated July 8th 1779.*

† M. and Madame du Saillant.

‡ Dupont, so well known by the name of Dupont de Nemours. A thousand passages in the Correspondence from Vincennes prove that the family and Dupont acted in concert; so much so, that Mirabeau, in that correspondence, continually accuses him of great injustice, and of sacrificing the persecuted to the persecutor. Notwithstanding this, Peuchet, in vol. i. p. 404, asserts: “ Dupont’s proceedings remained for a length of time unknown to the family;

from the gentleman reached the latter under the greatest secrecy, begging him to see M. Boucher, a clerk of the secret police, though not very secret himself, who proposed to him to see M. Lenoir; and afterwards the Count. Dupont, who was Turgot's right arm, when M. Lenoir* was turned out, and who consequently cannot trust himself to the latter, at first declined; but on his return from the country, he went to see the fellow, and gave him his advice. They formed their plots, and the consequence was those letters we received. On the reception of the replies, M. Boucher forwarded them to Dupont, informing him that he found them too harsh, too unrelenting, and did not dare forward them. Dupont sent them back again with an answer, that if the gentleman expected his family would make him excuses, it was needless to correspond*."

Mirabeau had, in fact, asked to see Dupont.

"I think I have perceived that he endeavours to reach me. Nature has lavished upon him all those gifts which do not depend upon man; and he has greatly enriched this happy disposition. I do not know any one who possesses to such an extent that

they became known all of a sudden, and the Marquis was violently irritated at not having been informed of them before."

* 1774.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated August 7th 1779.

nobleness which is not written in ink upon old parchments. I value this latter much less, when found alone, because I myself possess it; but I highly prize that which is engraven on the heart of man in sacred and indelible characters. He will console, aid, and procure me literary assistance. I shall, at least, open my bleeding heart to one who appreciates and understands it, and will answer me. Do not imagine that his indulgence is what I love in him. He has too high an idea of my talents and of the little merit I possess; but nobody ever told me the truth more undisguisedly. He is not blind to my defects, neither will he flatter my errors, although he is not ignorant of the origin of them *."

Whatever Mirabeau might hope from Dupont's intercession, he was anxious to be indebted for it to a feeling of esteem, more than to the emotion of pity. He was therefore desirous that his situation and his case should be first fully explained to his friend; the more so, because he was aware of the kind of moral dependence in which the latter was placed with regard to the Marquis, who might have prejudiced him against his unhappy son.

Mirabeau therefore wrote :—

“ The agitation of my heart on seeing again this dear

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated January 18th 1779.

friend whom I had not embraced for eight years, the natural warmth of conversation, the confusion of my ideas, jarring together, crowding and annihilating each other, the baneful spell of solitude, which has deprived me of the facility of expressing myself,—all this rendered me utterly incapable of explaining every thing in so short a time with the necessary precision. How indeed was it possible for me to state, during a rapid interview, and in presence of a third person unknown to me, all that was important for me that Dupont should know? Entreat M. Lenoir to permit my forwarding to him the letter I sent you for my father, dated March 2nd 1778 *. It contains an account of my conduct during eight years, which is absolutely necessary, in order that Dupont may be made acquainted both with my faults in their true light, and with their causes and excuses, and also with the resources I have left. He cannot give me good advice, unless every thing on both sides is fully known to him. Had I no other reason for forwarding these explanations than the pleasure of clearing myself in his mind from two or three errors, of which he is persuaded I am guilty, and which, for my life, I would not have committed, I could

* He here alludes to the noble justification we have quoted so often, and which is at the end of the first volume of the "*Original Letters written from the Donjon of Vincennes*," pp. 287—436. Dupont saw it as Mirabeau desired. See *Original Letters from Vincennes*, vol. iii. p. 262.

wish, at any price, that he should hear me, because I desire neither the friendship nor the pity, of those I even cherish the most, unless they also grant me their esteem, which I believe, and indeed know I deserve, and am determined to deserve. I am a 'madman,' as much as they please, but an honest man as long as I please, that is, as long as I live *. He can less misunderstand what relates to me, because I have fully stated every thing that can enable him to read the bottom of my soul; and if my explanations do not justify all, I dare assert they will excuse all, and raise an interest in my favour. But as it is in writing that I like to make my manifestos, because what remains is the touchstone of good faith, I beg of you to send him my letter, however much it may alarm your timid prudence.†."

Mirabeau took these steps, at the instigation not only of his friends and advisers, but also of Sophie, whose generous disinterestedness deserves to be known. She had taken upon herself to write to the Marquis of Mirabeau, accusing herself, and begging for the liberation of the prisoner. Mirabeau, who had vainly endeavoured to dissuade her from making this application, wrote :—

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated May 8th 1779.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated May 8th 1779.

“ Ah ! tell me—Would you yourself pardon me, if I had allowed an opportunity to escape of expressing to her my gratitude for her sublime conduct ? She meditated a folly, be it so ; but was not this folly the transport of an infinitely noble and feeling heart, of the most elevated and enchanting mind ? Alas ! she will not be understood ! Another Sophie alone could appreciate and admire all the dignity of such proceeding.

“ Tell her that her letter is gone ; for you can feel that her heart beats with love and impatience*.”

We must, however, say that this letter was “ understood,” for the Marquis spoke feelingly respecting it.

“ This letter is, in truth, well penned. I replied as I ought, and my answer enchanted her woman’s ‘ mad and overheated imagination.’ I have received a letter now at my feet, and the ‘ petites maisons romanesques †.’ I think that all the mad men and women have concerted together to pay me respect ‡.”

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated August 22nd 1779. Afterwards, Mirabeau, in writing to the same individual, thus expressed himself:—

“ You have kept a copy ; read again and again her eloquent letter to my father. The great Rousseau would have been proud at having written it. It is as strong in argument as overflowing with sensibility ; I do not feel myself skilful enough to refute her even if I wished to do so.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated November 1st 1779.*

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated October 3rd 1779.

Mirabeau wrote on this occasion :—

“My father’s conduct affects me, and you will observe it in the few words I have written to him. Alas ! if, in his old age, he regrets the consequences of his severity, I must forget them, and pity him *.”

Another equally affecting proof of that prompt return of sensibility so natural to Mirabeau, is found in the following passage :—

“At length, this father conducts himself with a tardy and slow, but rare generosity !

“If I succeed in drawing one tear from him, I shall be rewarded for all that his despotism has made me lose and suffer † !”

At this same period, Sophie planned an attempt no less noble and delicate, and which Dupont and Boucher prevented her from accomplishing. We see in the letters from Vincennes ‡, that she wanted to apply to the Countess of Mirabeau herself ; and the object of her generous efforts was to prevent the steps which

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated September 11th 1779. Mirabeau, alluding to the same subject, said some time after:

“It is a great deal that my father has been touched. Confess that Sophie is an admirable creature.”—*Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated November 8th 1779.*

† Unpublished letter, already quoted, from Mirabeau to Madlle Danvers. We repeat, that there could be nothing written to be read by his father in this letter to a young lady totally unknown to the family, and who never went near them.

‡ Vol. iii. p. 443.

Mirabeau, tired of waiting, was desirous of taking immediately. His intention was to apply to the higher authorities, whom he supposed tired of their own rigour, a project known to Sophie, and which the prisoner had also mentioned to Boucher :—

“I confide to your honour and friendship, good angel, that Dupont appeared to me so uneasy lest my father should be forced to yield, if he delayed it too long, that I thought M. de Maurepas might have said something. Keep what I tell you secret. M. de Maurepas knows of my correspondence with Sophie. Could not M. Lenoir, my worthy benefactor, and yourself, hint to the ‘all-powerful,’ that since he permitted that important favour which has saved my life, he surely cannot desire to ruin me; and that if he does not wish to blind, stupify, or kill me, he must, at least, think about restoring me to a half freedom *.”

To dismiss at once this particular subject, we here insert short extracts, proving, that in fact, Mirabeau, in spite of his father’s very great influence, would have had some chance of obtaining his release, if, instead of asking it from his family alone, he had persisted in applying to the authorities.

“Dupont proved to me that Honoré, during the last year, resisted every possible suggestion which assured

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated August 1st 1779.

him he could obtain his liberation without me. Fortunately, he took the right side, and would not act *. If I had not released my son, my enemies would have forced him from me, and all would have thrown the accusing stone at me †. It is but too true that the police, which were at his orders, wanted to force me. Do you wish to know what had become of the respect for morals and the paternal sceptre, under that old hare-brained de Maurepas? When Nivernois asked him in my name for an order to cut the correspondence short, and send away Brianson and other adherents of the gang, he found him prepared, and highly exasperated. He received for answer :—

“ ‘ Here are sixty letters or orders for the Mirabeau family! It would require a secretary of state on purpose for them. If all who live by intrigue were to be sent out of Paris, the grass would grow in the streets. The father really takes me for his agent. Is it not a shame that there should be no end to these scandalous family feuds? The king will hear no more about them ‡.’ ”

Although Mirabeau's impatience was perfectly

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated January 19th 1781.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated February 16th 1781.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 17th 1781. The Duke of Nivernois married the sister of Count Maurepas.

justifiable, it did not induce him to have recourse to the treacherous manœuvre of which he was then accused by the habitual prejudice of his father, an accusation which several biographers have since repeated, either when speaking of this fact, or of others equally false, or much exaggerated. The following is what he wrote to Boucher on this occasion :

“ It must be owned, my dear friend, that I am a happy mortal ! Do you know the new incident that strews with thorns my unfortunate career, and digs new precipices in my path ? Dupont, whom I have just seen, informs me that a statement has appeared on behalf of my mother, in which ‘ my style has been recognised.’ This production has been shown to my father as written by me. He is grievously offended at it, the more so because it has been hawked about at Versailles, and presented to the Queen and Madame, both of whom refused to have any thing to do with it. Dupont complained dreadfully, and with reason, of such a train having been laid unknown to him. He had nothing to say when I called to witness every thing sacred in the world, and M. Lenoir, and yourself, that it was both false and impossible : but you must admit that I am a most unfortunate man ! Read, I beseech you, the inclosed letter for M. Lenoir, and find some means of clearing me of the imputation with my father ; for Dupont has been pusillanimous enough not to defend me. The surest way of delivering me from this

execrable charge, is to discover the author of the statement. Reflect deeply upon the matter, and extricate me from this new labyrinth*. I entreat you, good angel, to allow of no false security founded upon my letter of the day before yesterday. Be assured that we shall have a great deal of trouble in undeceiving my father. Now, he is the only person to undeceive: the others will not suspect me. With regard to what you mention respecting my imagination, you are right. I am sensitive to excess, and am not sorry for it; but setting that aside, who could coldly hear himself cruelly taxed with infamy † ? ”

We lately mentioned the impassioned eagerness of Sophie, when using every means to assist Mirabeau. Some time after, an attempt of this nature gave rise to an incident, too trifling to mention, otherwise than in a note; and we should not even think it worth while to insert it all, were it not related in the correspondence from the donjon of Vincennes, although by no means sufficiently explained ‡.

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated October 3rd 1779.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated October 5th 1779.

‡ Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. iii. pp. 499, 505, 508, 513, 524, 536, 539, 542, 588, 594, 597; vol. iv. pp. 30, 39. The following is extracted from a letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau.

“ I believe I told you that this man writes to whomever he pleases, and also that everything reaches him. It is the same thing at the

But these repeated attempts of Sophie were suggested to her by what she knew of the moral disposition of

Convent of Gien, where *his* Sophie is ; they write to each other, console each other, and advise each other. The complaisant police approves of everything : for the most corrupt are the most tolerant, and the romance continues. He has obtained warm adherents, and has no more wanted for testimonials of good conduct than for the support which made him master in a place which he entered only for the purpose of remaining buried."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated July 3rd 1779.*

" But here comes another piece of business : the Chevalier (afterwards Viscount) arrived from Montargis, with a mysterious romance. He was requested to go to Gien ; he went thither post haste. They made him assume a disguise, and thus gain admittance into the convent of your fictitious sister-in-law. This wiseacre conversed with another wiseacre of the other sex, who spoke of her passion, of the illness of her beloved, of his eyes, his colic, and all the customary elegies, and exacted the Chevalier's promise to obtain his release *."

Now comes the contradiction, written by the Marquis himself.

" At the same moment I received a letter addressed to me, and inside it the words 'for the Chevalier Mirabeau,' begging me to read it before I forwarded it. This letter was from Gien, from the convent of the Lady Monnier, who, expressing herself in a polite and humble manner towards me, spoke her mind plainly to the Chevalier, saying she was sorry to prove him guilty of such dastardly meanness as a malicious falsehood, defying him to maintain it, or to bring forward the slightest evidence whatever in support of it ; and to tell her whether she is tall or short, dark or fair †."

Lastly, we have a formal retraction, addressed by the Viscount to the Bailli.

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to M. du Saillant, dated July 3rd 1779.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 3rd 1779.

the prisoner, who really was weary of his fruitless applications to his father. The latter, at the same period, wrote thus:—

“With regard to his letters, I do not even acknowledge the receipt of them *.”

Mirabeau, meanwhile, continued to apply to his uncle, whom the past had taught him to appreciate, and whose true feelings he plainly discovered under

“I had asked my father's permission to spend a couple of days at Montargis, where several persons had invited me for the festival of St. Magdalen. I have in that town a sister, who is a nun; there also resides a lady who brought her up*, as well as my nieces†. This lady, whom I visited every day, because my family is under the greatest obligations to her, had just received a letter from the Marchioness of Monnier, begging her to apply to my father for my brother's release, as he had sore eyes and an attack of stone. They spoke to me of the lady, told me how easy it would be to see her, stating the name of her physician, &c. Having remained a fortnight at Montargis, I was fearful I should be ill received on my return to Bignon. I arrived at this latter place full of the whole history of Gien. Thinking that it would be merely laughed at and then forgotten, I endeavoured to excuse my delay by a romance which I fabricated; I maintained this falsehood, which I imagined would harm no one, and I now learn that the king, the councillors of state, and the devil himself, are interfering in the matter‡.”

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 10th 1779.

* Madame de Remiguy.

† The daughters of Madame du Saillant.

‡ Letter from the Chevalier, afterwards Viscount Mirabeau, to the Bailli, dated January 1st 1780.

the severity he was forced to assume. He therefore wrote to him on the 18th of July.

We do not transcribe his letter, because on the one hand the substance is given in Manuel's collection*; and on the other hand it had been, in some measure, re-written by Dupont, whose zeal and timid prudence may be appreciated from the following passage:—

“ You will, I am convinced, feel the same uneasiness that I do with regard to the answers which the Count may have received, and the imprudences in which his haughty temper may involve him. He has, I confess, begun well; but it is on that very account that if difficulties arise, they must not alarm him. I wish he would write nothing without giving me an opportunity of advising him upon the propriety of his letter, and checking his impetuosity, which injures him to no purpose. You are attached to him, and I beseech you not to forward any of his letters, unless they breathe nothing but mildness*.”

The Bailli continued to reply to Mirabeau:—

“ I repeat that I have nothing personally to forgive you. I have forgiven your sister, as a Christian, as a religious man, and as hoping to be forgiven by the Supreme Being. But I can no longer answer for any thing. If the other parties interested pardon you,

* Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes, vol. iii. p. 345.

† Unpublished letter from Dupont de Nemours to M. Boucher, dated July 6th 1779.

I do not oppose it; but I shall not urge them to do so. I have, however, sounded your father about you; he has assured me he can do nothing for you, but that he has sincerely forgiven you the personal injuries you have done him, as they have injured nobody but yourself*.”

Mirabeau stood the more in want of this favourable disposition, as he was far from meeting with them in other quarters. He had written to his father-in-law, who answered him very harshly.

“M. de Marignane’s letter appears to me so heavy a blow for the poor young man, that before I let it fall upon his head, I could wish to find some method of softening it down, or applying a remedy†.”

Mirabeau now caught still more eagerly at the hope which this paternal pardon seemed to hold out.

“Your letter has left me no other feeling than the desire of thanking you for the consolatory assurance that my father has forgiven me those of my faults which are personal to himself. It is certain, and I

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to Mirabeau, dated September 14th 1779.

† Unpublished letter from Dupont de Nemours to M. Boucher, dated September 14th 1779.

“The officious M. Boucher has sent Marignane’s letter to Dupont, as he found it too harsh. I was not sorry that those protectors should read that sort of prose.”—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated September 16th 1779.*

eagerly repeat it, that with these happy tidings gladness has entered these fatal walls. My faults towards my father, caused by the delirium of a moment, and into which I was hurried by those who wished to ruin me through my errors, had made me conceive that he was placing faith in an accusation against me, unworthy of both of us. The faults I have committed against my father were and are the greatest weight upon my conscience. I do not think you will find that this is having no correct ideas of any thing. In this respect, at least, my head, which I in nowise excuse, is not turned, and my heart is honest, sincere, and certain in its repentance.

“ Allow me to add to this, which is, and shall remain my profession of faith, a few reflections, submitted to your prudence, and addressed to your kindness.

“ Whether my father can or will yet do something more for me, or whether he may not be willing, or think he is not willing to do so, his having been able and willing to forgive me is so great a point gained, that the remainder appears trifling in comparison.

“ This remainder, nevertheless, is frightful. The activity of a madman, if you will, but who does not think himself incapable of doing well, and the workings of a heart, in the main noble and sincere, with as many faults to make amends for as I have, shut up between solid walls, within a space of six

feet square, is a dreadful thing. The most cruel of my torments is the certainty of not being able to take a single step, without suspicion of its being dictated by base or sordid motives. When strong feeling brings me to your feet, or those of my father, and prompts me to make those advances which I consider right, towards the Countess of Mirabeau and her father, I say to myself, ‘they are at liberty not to believe you;’ and, nevertheless, my heart says, ‘you deserve to be believed : you advance nothing that you would not accomplish at the sacrifice of every drop of your blood.’

“ It would certainly be the Countess of Mirabeau’s real interest to come to my aid. It would redound greatly to her honour, and prove to me a more powerful bond than the captivity in which I am now held. I dare not hope she will act thus. Would it not be worthy of my father’s generosity not to grant me a sterile pardon alone, but to put me in a situation to deserve it? Such a thing would afford him an opportunity of enjoying yet a few happy moments, and to procure them for him, I would devote every energy of my being. I cannot doubt that he will show this generosity, which would yield him so much satisfaction.

“ It would be in accordance with the character of the best of uncles, of him who certainly has done a hundred times more for his nephews than they had a right to expect—it would be in accordance, I say, with his

unalterable and noble goodness, not to desert an unfortunate nephew, who feels towards him the most deserved and affectionate attachment, and is most eager to justify his favour. Yet he has written to me, that he will do nothing for me. I know you well, my dear uncle, and will not believe that this sentence is definitive.

“ I must, undoubtedly, suffer for my faults, but I beseech you to tell me that you do not impute to me those of my sister *. Your justice must grant me thus much. This point settled, and I am certain you cannot in equity refuse to do it, I will not ask you to answer for me, but only make bold to request you to try me once more, and not condemn to death and oblivion the eldest of your house. Would it not be possible, under the same despotism that keeps me here, and on condition of returning hither, if you felt the least discontented with my arrangements or my conduct, for me to pass a few months with you at Mirabeau? How much I should have to say to you, which, perhaps, would make you judge me with a little more indulgence! Oh! how anxious I am to deserve your good will, and in the absence of that, I would content myself with your pity †!”

These supplications touched and embarrassed the Bailli.

* Madame de Cabris.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to the Bailli, dated October 30th 1779.

“ You would oblige me very much by dictating to me the substance of the answer I am to make him, for you know that I must remain neuter. I must, however, tell you, for the discharge of my conscience, that were you certain of again catching the bird, if, after having left his cage, he deserved to return to it, and there was a government which, in this general darkness, studded with glow-worms, did not think it beneath them to enter into the wants of noble families;—finally, if the trial he asks to undergo with me was practicable, I would consent to it—and why should I not own it?—most willingly *.”

Similar feelings of indulgence had not yet taken possession of the Marquis.

“ Boyer † has sent me the letter written to you by this madman. I have also seen one from him, in which he says, that the person he most loves and respects is his uncle. In that same letter, he calls you the ‘ Baron of Feudality.’ He also follows up his design, for he writes to me long and far-fetched stories respecting this extraordinary pardon, and makes a great display of it. I do not think he is laying a snare for you, but only that he likes to touch upon this chord, because it is the one which affects his pride the least. I have also seen his letters to his wife and

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated October 30th 1779.

† Boyer, the administrator of the estates in trust, at Aix.

to Marignane. Both, in my opinion, are deserving only of contempt. He is, in every thing, a madman by nature. He is raging with impudence and pride. In truth, I will lend my hand to nothing but a decided demand from his wife, because she alone has a right to make it. I would rather cut off both my hands than engage her to do it; and she would be mad if she acted otherwise than in concert with her father*."

Mirabeau, encouraged by the Bailli's kindness, without being disheartened by the frequent bitterness of his letters, continued to write to him.

"I feel that by my errors I have but too much impaired your happiness; and if they furnish the opportunity of a just repentance, they also afford me the pleasure of thinking that you have not, altogether, discarded all interest in my behalf, although you do not think proper to do any thing for me. But I am wrong: you have done much more than I had

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated November 26th 1779. If the Marquis is accused, it will not be of inconsistency this time; for shortly after he thus wrote to the Marquis of Marignane:—

"His wife would always have a right to ask it, but I should be the first to judge her worthy of being interdicted, if she did so without her father's consent."—*Letter dated April 24th 1780, inserted in the Case for the Countess of Mirabeau, &c., p. 34.*

The Marquis of Marignane made no scruple of following this advice, for it was he alone who, through obstinate selfishness, prevented, four years subsequently, the husband and wife from again living together.

any right to expect, when you consented to answer my letters. Accept my best wishes on the renewal of the year; whatever may be my fate, until the end of my melancholy career, may the recollection of me never weary you, and may it leave to your venerable old age, all that peace of mind you have so well deserved, by a life devoted to the exercise of every virtue *."

This letter, like every other, was read by the Marquis, who thus expressed himself on the subject:—

"It appears to me, that as you had just written to him, the compliments of the new year were not required, and that this regularity of his, in returning letter for letter, of which he already makes a boast, is useless, the more so as, in consequence of his ill-formed mind, it gives him the greatest hopes. You ought not, in my opinion, to honour him with a regular correspondence. I think the wishes for a new year, ought to be understood. Mind, the Count mistakes compliments for mere words, and he understands your expression relative to my pardon as an absolution. Absolution! be it so; but penitence is indispensable. You have told him the precise point, and, on my part, I have informed him, without reserve, that henceforward, he can be nothing but through his wife; the more so, because this is more than true. Finding

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated December 15th 1779.

his pride and his heart more perverse than ever, I devote him to the kindness of the police, of which he disposes. I consider him incurable, and will never more interfere with him *."

A passage in this letter relates to a subject which we have hitherto left unnoticed, although it is frequently mentioned in the correspondence from Vincennes. We allude to Mirabeau's physical sufferings. His sight was much impaired, in consequence of his excessive and continual labours, which nevertheless constituted the whole pursuits of the prisoner's life, the solace of his captivity, and his resource in distress ; but his constitution was giving way, on account of its very strength, and for want of exercise. We shall dwell only a moment on this subject, to show the severe treatment he was then enduring.

" M. Lenoir informs me, by this last post, that the wild fellow, ' has suffered the greatest agony, for some days past, has voided blood with his urine, and the physician, who attends him, apprehends it to be symptoms of the stone.' But I have not forgotten his old tricks to excite pity, his other pranks, and his baths, for which you were silly enough to pity him, although the whole was assumed. My business is to keep him secure, in the first place, and to think of other things

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated January 1st 1780.

afterwards*. If the Count chooses to let out all the blood in his veins, he will lose nothing by it; and even though he had the stone, of which, let the doctor say what he will, this is no symptom, the stone is very usually cut out with closed doors. It will have no effect on his confinement.

“ I have told you before, that during the summer of 1778, in the months of July and August, I received a bill for baths and cooling medicines, prescribed by the physician, and attested both by the fellow himself and the commandant. Nothing was omitted. I took no notice of the bill, and returned no answer. Last winter brought me a second appeal from the king’s lieutenant, who even threatened to continue his remonstrances. I paid no more attention to this. Lastly came a letter from the minister, announcing ‘stone and catarrh,’ and telling me that I certainly could not mean to let him die without relief; and that the king’s orders must be attended to. Covered with scars as I was, and not easily intimidated—looking on such admonitions to a man of influence and years as the warning of a starling offered to an elephant, I submitted to inquire into the matter. I was told that it was the result of an arrangement between M. de Maurepas,

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated July 22nd 1778.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated July 31st 1778.

M. Amelot, and M. Lenoir. I replied, like a man conscious of his importance, that the two latter were too young to teach me ; and that the former had known long enough that I was a man not likely to forget my duty *."

Let us now return to the place which this incidental narrative induced us to quit for an instant. The correspondence before us shows us that, although the Bailli did not flatly oppose his brother, he continued to reply to Mirabeau's letters.

" I cannot exactly guess what expressions in my former letters have so much flattered your hopes regarding the forgiveness which your father grants you, with reference to what concerns him personally. But assuming this pardon to be unconditional, what can he do for you? Assuming even that of the families you have injured, your wife cannot assist you. I tell you, besides, with all the sincerity you know I possess, that your letters to her, as well as those

* Unpublished letter, already quoted, from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated January 1st 1780. Some time previously he had written :—

" They have driven me to make the profession of faith with which I have armed myself since they began teasing me on this subject. According to my method, which has served me against every other, and which is to have none at all, I told the truth."—*Letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis of Marignane, dated April 24th 1789. Case for the Countess of Mirabeau, &c., p. 36.*

to your father-in-law, exhibit the same pride that ruined you. Have you not been convicted of a crime which the king, at his coronation, made oath never to pardon, and for which the courts of justice would not register a pardon, even if the king were disposed to mercy? Have you not been condemned to pay enormous damages to persons who cannot relax without sacrificing every thing, since evidence exists in the fruit of your guilty passion? Are you not weighed to the earth with debts? With all these circumstances before me, could I, if I would, at my age, and with all my infirmities, go and bury myself in a castle, that I might witness your conversion? How can you atone for what you choose to call your errors, but what others term your crimes? The trial you solicit is utterly impossible. Your haughty spirit urges you to call that hand despotic which has warded off the public vengeance; but that friendly hand may grow weary, and not always hearken to the prayers of a family: so that if I were to interfere, I should be accountable for whatever might happen *."

Mirabeau was not slow in answering this letter, and we transcribe part of his reply.

" My very dear Uncle,

" If I did not look upon you as possessing the

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to Mirabeau, dated December 14th, 1779.

greatest virtue, the soundest judgment, and the most incorruptible equity of any man I ever met, I should resign myself to my fate (for I am not much in the habit of bargaining for life, and I think the close of mine not very far off), and make no reply to the letter you did me the honour to write on the 14th of this month. But I have a thousand things to say in reply to that letter, since you will read mine.

“I shall therefore make bold to unfold my thoughts and feelings with the greatest sincerity; and I have such faith in your goodness, that I doubt not you will deign to read attentively what I write, correct me when I am wrong, and not deny me a little indulgence in return for my confidence and candour.

“Your letter of the 24th of September acquainted me, dear uncle, with ‘my father’s forgiveness for my personal wrongs to himself.’ As these wrongs are the heaviest I have committed, and the only ones, too, which inspire me with acute remorse, whilst my other faults, for reasons you shall know hereafter, make me feel nothing worse than bitter repentance, this happy news relieved me from a heavy load;—not because I forgive myself, or see the pledge of my safety in this forgiveness; but truly because, whether at liberty or in confinement, in health or in sickness, it was an awful thing to say to myself, ‘thy father hates thee.’ This was the most painful of my fears, the most afflicting of my misfortunes: yet my fears are not removed

although I am relieved. After this explanation, permit me now to turn to other matters in your letter.

“First, my dear uncle, I must tell you freely, that in a country where there is no constitution, no adequate law, and where society is truly in a state of warfare, the majority of positive laws that exist, inspire me with contempt. A man may become very wicked before they have authority to punish him ; he may be perfectly good, and yet have broken several, and perhaps even pride himself on having trampled upon a few. I do not pretend to be right, but this is my firm belief ; and so long as my conscience and the laws of nature lay no sin to my charge, I confess to you that the actual law will never make me feel either remorse or fear.

“But perhaps you will put this question to me : ‘Is your conscience so easily quieted on the subject of the abduction?’ I do not pretend to say that it is, uncle : I might, if I were not afraid of tiring you, examine whether there has been any abduction proved against me ; and if the abduction be indeed proved, whether it is as bad as abductions are in general. I might send you the pathetic and stirring letter which drove me three times across the Alps, made me risk my life twenty times, and plunge at last headforemost into the gulf, and then ask you—‘am I an infamous seducer, or rather a generous man, who, feeling that he had engaged his faith too seriously, but likewise that such engagement once formed, he was absolutely bound to her whom he had in some sort prejudiced, and whose

life was in danger, desired above all to serve the lady he had injured, when, under the dagger's point, she called to him for protection?'

"But this is said solely in reply to your remark—'the crime which the king swore at his coronation never to forgive!' He took the same oath with regard to duels; and yet, though you heartily despise a duellist, you will not surely conclude that a good man should never fight. You know, as well as I do, that the crimes which found no favour at the coronation, and were judged unworthy of reprieve at the council-board*, were duelling, highway robbery, high treason both human and divine, poisoning, coining, abduction, rape, incendiarism, murder; lastly, desertion, imprisonment for fines payable to the king, smuggling of salt, and every other kind of smuggling perpetrated by bands.

"Thus we see smugglers of salt, and other smugglers, prisoners for fines, and deserters, assimilated to murderers, incendiaries, and those guilty of treason to kings! (As for those guilty of treason to God, I do not know who they are, and it irritates me when I hear people speak of avenging God, and attribute to him our notions and passions.)

"Since people may be hanged and broken upon the

* This passage, from the words "the crimes which found no favour" to "our notions and passions," appears in a note by Mirabeau, at the end of the fifth chapter of the "*Lettres de Cachet*," vol. i. p. 101.

wheel for the crime of coining, it clearly appears that the king has the double power : first, to create crimes, and then to punish the crimes he has created, by the most frightful torture, as much so as if the most abominable violation of the laws of nature had been committed ;—that, therefore, by the most despotic means, I would say the most extravagant, were the subject less hateful, the king is at liberty to waive all proportion between the punishment and the injury *. But does it not follow of course that such a sovereign must needs possess the privilege of pardoning, that heavenly right which he shares only with his Maker, and with which it is proper to intrust him to its fullest extent, on account of our barbarous laws. Without it, every abolishment of a crime, every reprieve from a penalty, would pass for an injustice towards mankind ; and there would be but little distinction between him who commits murder against the laws, and him who saves a life in spite of them †.

“ Be that as it may, the privilege of pardoning is unbounded, as well it may be in so absolute a monarchy as ours ; and since you mention the coronation oath, with which we both know his majesty sometimes dis-

* This part of the paragraph, from the words “ it clearly appears that the king,” &c., was borrowed, or repeated by Mirabeau in his “ *Lettres de Cachet*,” vol. i. p. 80.

† The same remark is applicable to this sentence, from the words “ that heavenly right,” &c. “ *Lettres de Cachet*,” vol. i. p. 352.

penses, allow me to say, that it is only on those occasions when he desires to show clemency, that he has laid claim to the exercise of an arbitrary will. He has sworn that on every other occasion he will respect, and cause to be respected, the laws which the basest of men can violate as well as he (*salvo condigno misericordiæ respectu*). Thus it is evident that the seducer should be pardoned as well as the duellist, when there are mitigating circumstances ; and, therefore, there is no shame in claiming such a favour for a son, a nephew, or a brother.

“ I speak of all these matters, dear uncle, in a positive tone, because what I say does not appear to me doubtful. Believe, however, that I am very willing to bow to your more enlightened judgment. Yet I can assure you, that since I have been in prison, I have discussed the point with men in office, lawyers, &c. Not one of these had any doubt that my father could obtain my pardon the moment he asked for it. I may even say that my opponents know it well enough ; that M. de Valdahon trembles at it, and expects it ; that Madame de Ruffey wishes it, in order to negociate for her daughter with greater advantage.

“ But, uncle, when reasoning with you, who of all men I have ever seen, alone remind me of Plutarch’s heroes, I will not stop to discuss propriety, but appeal at once to common right, the unsuspected judge of every upright man, who, like

yourself, exclaims as he begins each day, 'let us go where duty leads ;' and I shall first define what I mean by despotism.

" It is that tyrannical justice which puts the will of one man in the room of the law's decrees ; which makes the life or fortune of a citizen depend upon a surprise or a mistake ; whose blows are the more terrible from being often silent and unseen ; which lets the wretch feel the shaft that pierces him, but not the hand whence it sped ; or which, after severing him from the universe, and condemning him to live that he may die a thousand times, leaves him to the pressure of his fetters, far removed from freedom, the venerable image of which is for ever veiled from his sight, and far removed from the power of the law, which, both in prison and in banishment, ought always to obey the call of the wretch by whom it is invoked.

" Shall I give you another definition of the despotism under which I suffer, and which I openly abhor ? I would call it, with ' the Friend of Men ' (in 12, vol. vi. page 72), an attribution which, though it were given to justice herself, would degenerate into tyranny, unless she recoiled from it with loathing, and refused to accept it.

" According to this definition, I forget for a moment my good fortune in having received my father's forgiveness for the wrongs personal to himself, and that consistently with gratitude, I cannot appeal to the

courts of justice. The following is pretty nearly the kind of defence I should make before your tribunal."

Here we break off our extract, and suppress the eloquent address which this last sentence ushers in, because the whole is partly contained in the "*Lettres de Cachet*," and altogether in the Vincennes collection *.

"My dear uncle, I do not know what you may think of this language, not at all like that of a courtier, but rather resembling that of one of your own kindred, who was born free, and does not forget it in a place where every thing says to him, 'you are no longer so;' who is acquainted with both the laws of nature and the laws of society, and will never succumb to either grief or adversity. I say I do not know what you may think of it; but I hope it will not appear offensive to you, any more than I intend it. Are you not the only one I appeal to, you who owe me nothing? Is not that sufficient to prove to you that I look upon you, in spite of your denials, as my tutelary genius, if one there be who can yet save me?

"You accuse me of pride. I am too near myself to be my own judge; but does it surprise you that my misfortunes should make me so? M. de Marignane wrote to me insultingly; I sent him a respectful reply.

* *Lettres de Cachet*, vol. i. p. 355; and *Letters from Vincennes*, vol. i. pp. 258—260, 416—420.

Was I to kiss the foot that was trampling upon me, and thus lead people to suppose that I would take liberty at any price?—that I would accept my life upon such terms? His daughter!—she ought to think my letters temperate. I never defamed her, as some have asserted; I respect myself too much to do so. The garbled and altered statement to which people appeal was not written by me; she knows it well. She knows too, and ought to be deeply sensible of it, that, with all my faults, I am not wanting in generosity. We will not, however, speak of her; were I to defend myself on this point, I should have too much the advantage of her. I sincerely repent of my faults; and my repentance will not allow me to recriminate—far otherwise. Let people learn to be just, and I shall receive much greater indulgence than I do at present.

“As for you, my dear uncle, who, let me say it again, owed me nothing, you were the first deigned to write to me, whilst every one else, without a single exception, refused even to give me tidings of my poor child, of whose death I was informed by a stranger. Whatever you may do for me, you shall have my last prayer. I am here, dwelling in an abode of sorrow, which is destroying me by inches, and will inevitably kill me. I am in torture from a serious attack of gravel; whilst cataract, impossible to prevent in this

everlasting solitude, where my only consolation lies in study, threatens to deprive me of sight. Grief and time, with enervating hands, are undermining my health, already too much impaired in every respect by the impetuosity of youth. But let me at once die unpitied, if I regret any thing so bitterly as the hopelessness of eradicating from your memory, and my father's, the recollection of my long errors. Call them madness, call them crimes, if you will—you are free to do so; I shall not venture to defend myself against you;—still this truth remains—that no repentance was ever more sincere than mine, no resolution of amendment more firm. But you will not grant me a trial; you will not even extend to me that pity felt even by an Asiatic tyrant who wrote to Alexander: 'Zizim cannot live buried in a dungeon; he only languishes, and is more than half dead. It would be an act of mercy to kill him at once, and send him to the regions of eternal peace.' I was vain enough to think myself not altogether undeserving of a better fate. If this is pride, pray forgive it. I am willing to humble myself before my father, whom I have offended. He is my father, and I love him. I will also humble myself before you, to whom I owe the tenderest and most respectful affection. But never will I do so before persons as much beneath me in principle, as it has pleased fate and fortune to place them in reality

above me. Let them forgive me as I forgive them, and I will thank them for it; let them do me good, and I will acknowledge it with all my soul, and all my strength. But so long as they persist in loading me with insults as a return for my civility and submission, I shall say to myself, 'thou art better than they are; for never hast thou repulsed or insulted the unfortunate; die, then, if it must be so, but heed them not!'

"Such, dear uncle, is my profession of faith, which I could defend and account for by many circumstances and proofs. But already have I sufficiently fatigued you with this long and tedious letter. I shall end it with a prayer, that you do not believe me capable of calumniating my uncle and benefactor, since you condescend to answer me and give your reasons for your conduct; and that, in future, you will drop those formula which wound my heart, and most bitterly aggravate the sense of my sufferings, such as: 'Monsieur le Comte, I am your very humble servant, &c.'

"It is not with such involuntarily bitter irony that you ought to write to an unfortunate nephew, who loves and reveres you, and would yield his life to persuade you of feelings which truly and strongly dwell in his heart. I entreat you again to be fully persuaded that, if in this letter I have taken the liberty to discuss my rights, which I only share with all mankind, I am still willing to acknowledge myself deprived of them, so long as it may please my father to

have it so, and that I abjure for ever all thoughts of litigation, which I have ever abhorred, whether past, present, or future *."

Does the reader wish to know what effect this letter produced on the father, whom so much eloquence should have moved, so much misery have appeased?

"As for that mad-brained fellow at Vincennes, all he says is nothing more than the philosophical prating of the great *perhaps*, the Phœbus of bad characters, an impudent recollection†. Three or four madmen like Diderot, D'Alembert, Rousseau‡, and other

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to the Bailli, dated December 25th 1779. In reference to this letter, Mirabeau wrote to Boucher, the same day:—

"I send you a letter which does not displease me; if you view it in the same light that I do, I beg you will forward it to Dupont by the earliest opportunity. I have not written after his fashion; I have followed the impulse of my heart, and you may depend upon it my uncle will be moved. I do not know how I have found strength to write it. I did not close my eyes the whole night; and my sufferings are greater than they have hitherto been. Ah! my friend! I have, and ought to have, but little love of life."

About this same letter Mirabeau wrote to Sophie:—

"I am sorry I cannot send you my answer: it is noble, tender, and full of truths; but, as it fills four closely written pages, as I was unwell when I wrote it, as I wanted to send it off immediately, and as I grow blinder every day, I could not keep a copy."—*Letters from the Donjon of Vincennes*, vol. iv. p. 120.

† Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 1st 1780.

‡ We think it rather curious to compare this opinion of the Marquis of Mirabeau on J. J. Rousseau, with what he said of that great writer at the period of his death.

worthless fellows, dressed in tinsel, with a jumble of books fit for the tower of Babel, and most of whom have nothing of their own but impudence, have been the storehouse of all our new philosophical trash,

“ I thank you, my dear Perreau *, for the account you have sent me. This was truly a man of talent and genius, and in him we have lost the most harmonious writer in our language, He was for heated minds and weak understandings what Massillon was for the wise, and Voltaire for the wicked and insane. The age is beginning to cast off whatever is beyond the reach of the vulgar. What a pity that a mind so transcendent and noble as that of Rousseau should have made so little use of its power, for his own good, and that of his fellow-creatures ! Because in sooth he must turn philosopher, walk upon his head, and be his own prop ! Let us compare, in point of result, the balm of Richardson with the sharp, pungent salt of Rousseau : the one perfumes you with the scent of real and practical virtue, the other inflames you with the heat of an imaginary virtue, fantastic, passionate, uneasy, wavering, which agitates everything, and settles nothing. Rousseau, such as we have seen him, possessed some rare virtues ; but, hurried away to the inevitable rock which must prove the destruction of every man vain enough to be his own guide, he could not escape from pride, the hollowness of the world, and the fulness of self. I will tell you concerning his death a thought I should take care not to publish. His early resolution to leave off writing, for fear of becoming inferior to himself, shows a mind in love with celebrity. That man was weary of everything. His change of conduct to reconcile himself to his end, his premature and planned death, his theatrical speech, his notion of contrasting himself with that ugly

* Jean-André Perreau, author of several excellent works, afterwards teacher of the law, a tribune, a joint framer of the civil code, inspector-general of the law colleges, &c. A very striking resemblance to the Marquis of Mirabeau caused him to pass for his natural son, having been born at his house, April 17th 1749. He died at Toulouse, July 6th 1813.

which ought never to be tolerated out of St. Lazare, or Charenton *. With regard to this one, when it is considered that he is almost one-and-thirty, good sense must judge him a fool. His letters prove him to be what I

Voltaire, to whose memory he is, in fact, at this very moment playing a sad trick, all show his love of notoriety. It is true that we have lost a writer remarkable for glow of thought and elegant and harmonious diction. I cherish, I honour his memory. He was most singularly gifted, and his gifts may have been a fatality to some weak understandings. His finest work is unfortunately tainted with immoral allusions; yet, in other respects it is inestimable, nay, edifying. I regret his loss deeply, and even now he renders me another service, by making me feel more intensely a great truth which I have always fondled (perhaps I needed so to do)—that man is never so much himself as when he feels his own littleness; when he discovers his origin in the views of his Creator; when he submits his conduct to those views, and to them likewise refers his fate. Remember, my dear Perreau, that the spring of life is spent by virtuous minds which have emulation, in amassing knowledge; a sterile provision of no use whatever unless it is referred to the only true science, that of knowing, accepting, and submitting. Riper age passes off amid vain projects, and daily troubles, which do not teach us how to live, and leave but few traces of our existence. The third stage of life pursues us with its inseparable concomitant, conviction of error. We live in affliction, we die each day in fancy, we regret our past ideal life, and we find it too late to enjoy the life of reality. Such is all that man is capable of by himself, in spite of his studiousness, his labour, and his will, unless this will be constantly and assiduously submissive to that of the Supreme Being,—unless he is persuaded of his own wretchedness, but encouraged, sustained, and elevated by the title and sense of his celestial origin and future destiny.”—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to M. Perreau, dated July 10th 1778.*

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated January 28th 1780. Charenton and St. Lazare are madhouses.

have all my life considered him. His turn of mind leads him towards emptiness. He was born for bathos as a greyhound for coursing. He is puffed up with the expressions of dreamers and castle-builders, which he catches with natural talent, without mixing so much as one poor grain of sense with three pints of words. Moreover, he has a base inclination for natural, moral, and physical plagiarism, and no sooner does he attempt to follow one chain of ideas, than he is lost in a maze of sound, like soap bubbles in the air, a very proper simile for such trashy ratiocination, and he concludes like a simpleton run wild. Next comes his pride, vain-glory, and constant lying. After all, he is nothing but a dangerous madman, whose insolent presumption serves him for wit, his pride for high feelings, and his impetuosity for courage *. His last master-piece is the only one of which he has sent me no copy. I suppose he is tired of my not answering his letters; however he did send me a new year's despatch, wherein he continued to talk about 'misfortunes' and 'faults.' This is the style of the day on which he suffers most, and 'near the term when we lose all idea of wretchedness as well as of remorse.' You see that all this is quite orthodox, and very respectful, being addressed to me,

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated January 28th 1780.

although he knows my principles, and my abhorrence of all proclaimed opinions denying the immortality of the soul, which alone can act as a check upon human passions. But no matter: I allow him to round his fine periods, and presume you will not answer his logic. Turn we our eyes from this dung-hill, and let it be thrown out upon the highway*.”

The Bailli, however, had already replied.

“ I thank you for your good wishes and observations on the new year. The years which Providence may please to grant me would have been happy, as happy, at least, as those of an old man can be, after a life of activity and weariness, if it had pleased my nearest relation, after my brother, to make him happy; for my brother’s happiness is mine. God has ordained it otherwise, and I bow to His decree.

“ So far as I can judge, you have not well considered and appreciated the faults to which you plead guilty. And, to tell you the truth, you seem to me

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated January 23rd 1780. It appears that this angry effusion had been anticipated, for we know that Dupont de Nemours was absolutely dismayed by the last-mentioned letter of Mirabeau.

“ Ah! sir, why allow him to write in this style to his uncle, and consequently to his father? I know them better than he does, and know better the language which ought to be addressed to them. I am very much afraid he has done himself great mischief.”—*Unpublished letter from Dupont de Nemours to M. Boucher, dated January 10th 1780.*

more than ever blinded by self-love which clothes failings in the garb of virtue, and addicted to the common fault among wrong-heads, which, I repeat, is to have no just idea of any thing, a qualification that fits them for the cap of Midas. You appear to me stunned by the very noise of your own arguments.

“ It really grieves me that you mistake the delirium of your imagination for philosophy. You complain of the government, but if it had forsaken you, what would you have done ?

“ I am far from entertaining of myself, and from thinking that you entertain, the opinion you profess respecting me. But I have lived in the world, and have always endeavoured to be just. I am anything but a courtier, or an instigator of despotism ; but, having long observed the world and human nature, under many disguises, and in many lands—having studied them minutely and leisurely before I had attained an age through which time carries us like lightning, I have come to the same conclusion as yourself, that a man’s conduct may be perfectly correct, and yet he may have reason to complain of the laws ; that it may likewise be very incorrect, and yet he shall be protected by them. I have also witnessed certain laws of honour at variance with the actual laws of the land. But what inference can we draw from this ? Nothing, save the weakness of human nature. Yet we cannot doubt that many of those who have laboured to im-

prove the actual laws were very intelligent legislators, and that almost all of them were actuated by the public welfare. It is therefore evident presumption, to consider yourself wiser than all other men. They could not produce a perfect work; nor indeed can God himself: for to make any thing perfect, he must make himself.

“ You are perfectly right, when you say that kings should possess the power of pardoning every crime, since you imagine they have the right of creating crimes.

“ Kings are men, and so far am I from taxing them with the errors they fall into, that I am only astonished they act so well as they do, considering the nonsense put into their royal heads, and that, with no better faculties than ordinary men, they are encompassed with snares. As men, and weak men, they may have erred by treating as criminal, some acts which were not really so; and to confound a smuggler with an assassin is to overturn our usual notions. But are they really confounded by the nature of the penalty? Are they so by the aid which, in cases of murder, is afforded to the police, and in other cases is withheld?

“ The wants of society have made it urgent that the king, whether officiating in person as a ruler, or having some one appointed to rule in his name, should possess the means of satisfying all the exigencies of this same society.

The mode of effecting this may be misunderstood : if so, let us attribute it to human imperfection ; but when the law is once established, that man who knowingly exposes himself to a degrading punishment, even when wrongly inflicted, is something very like a scoundrel.

“ You talk of natural law : but those who invoke this law, forget that, according to their own meaning, none but wild beasts have a right to appeal to it ; and this right belongs to the latter, as owing nothing but to nature. Taking, however, the true sense of the matter, every human law is but an interpretation of this great law of nature.

“ You invoke the natural law ! Well ! what is its decree ? ‘ Do unto others as you would they should do unto you.’ Now examine yourself, and tell me whether you should like to be done unto, as you have done unto others.

“ I cannot answer all your arguments. But you have shown me, without intending it, that you only feel your faults in their effect, and not in their cause.

“ I shall not notice that part of your letter between inverted commas * ; but do not believe that I am unable to answer it. Your father is entitled to the chief rule over you. This at once is the first and most natural authority.

* The allocation inserted in the Vincennes collection, vol. i. pp. 238, 259, 260, 416—420.

“ With reference to your father-in-law, you call that an insult, which was no more than a simple statement of your errors towards society. Examine yourself fairly, and say whether you ever spent many of your days of freedom without complaining, or giving cause of complaint to others? Had you ever a friend with whom you did not quarrel?

“ But I am going too far, and I neither desire, nor have any right to grieve you. As I can do you no service, it is not fair to reproach you. I conclude by wishing most cordially, but with no hope whatever, that you may sincerely repent of, and acknowledge, your errors. These are the feeling with which I am, Monsieur le Comte, yours, etc.

“ P. S.—Your correspondence with me cannot appear so agreeable to you as to make you wish to carry it on. Do not then tire your eyes by writing to me, since I can do nothing for you *.”

Whatever the Bailli might say, he did not in his heart wish to drop a correspondence which was paving the way for his nephew's release. The latter immediately replied :—

“ My dear uncle, you deceive yourself: harsh as they are, there is a latent sweetness in your letters, which serves to console me in spite of their gloom. Do not deprive me of this comfort.

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to Mirabeau, dated January 10th 1780.

“Is it nothing in my situation to have a friend in the wide world who does not forsake me—to see an upright, good, and sensible man thinking of me, giving me his advice, and lecturing me?—an uncle, who has shown me the tenderness of a father, who has both wished and done me good; who is dearer and more estimable to me than I have words to express?

“I can detect his kindly feelings even through his sternness of expression. If he thought his remonstrances vain, he would not write to me. No, uncle!—a man is not dead so long as he can feel, and think; and he that is not dead, may atone and deserve forgiveness. Heaven keeps open for man, up to the last moment of his life, a road to indulgence and reward. Shall men presume to be more severe than their Maker?—and is there no way to their hearts? Alas!—who is he that needs no indulgence? This is the finest moral in the Lord’s Prayer.

“I am forced to defend myself on some points, because I am guilty enough in others to require that my faults should not be aggravated. But were they even more grievous, would they be inexpiable in the eyes of my family, my supporters, and my kinsmen, when they are pardonable before God? I trust He will save my soul. But is it determined that my body shall die—that body which is the only property of mine in the power of man? Will your

goodness deliver the verdict? And if you, who certainly do not want firmness nor rigid justice, dare not deliver it, ought you not to wish, generous uncle, that it should not be delivered by any one, and that means of escape should be afforded me? Ought you not to help me to such means? Pent up within these vaults, I can see but dimly. But ought not those who see more clearly, to extend a hand to direct my steps, and second my most earnest wish to recover the good opinion of the world? Sincere repentance is always entitled to forgiveness; and every resolution to do right deserves aid. Shall the one be granted to me without the other? When I exclaim, ‘save me, I am ready to do all that is desired of me to merit the favour:’ shall they reply, ‘*die?*’ You will not. You will surely consider it a sort of duty to obtain for me a very different reply.

“What must I do? I know not. Let it be pointed out to me, and I will do it. I am inured to suffering, and fear no struggle. When we want to make a purchase, we demand the price. What do I want to purchase? The advantage of being able to be virtuous, and to earn hereafter a full pardon. Let a price be fixed. It will then be my duty to endeavour to pay the sum, or surrender myself, if I become insolvent. But to bury me thus irretrievably and without proposing any terms, when I beg for them, would be too cruel.

“Pardon me, my dear uncle, I again entreat you. It

is the nature of an overflowing heart to act as I do; my heart is constantly repeating, how much it respects and loves you, how much it relies upon you. Enlighten it: be its guide. This heart, once so impetuous, has become tractable: it will obey the least motion of your hand, or my father's. Write to me, my good uncle, deign to write to me; and tell me what attempts to make. From the sea-shore we warn a shipwrecked sailor to cling to such a plank; if we can, we throw him a rope.

“ Nothing can equal the tenderness, the reliance, and veneration with which I have the honour, etc *.”

These letters, though they were invariably read by the Marquis of Mirabeau, did not appease him, as is manifest in the following sentence, written at this period:—

“ This man has been created with a crooked mind. Formerly, when madmen spoke irrationally they were locked up, and there was an end of the matter; now they argue, people listen to their logic, then believe, and then set them free. He lives in these times, and they have completed his madness. I have adequate proofs that his heart, pride, and plans have not changed. He deserves confinement for his crimes; and something worse perhaps, at least a worse prison

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to the Bailli, dated January 19th 1780.

than his present place of confinement. There is no other way of keeping such a bird fast*. I told the king's lieutenant at Vincennes that any mitigation or indulgence would be contrary to my wish†, and that I knew of no adequate security but four walls, and would not therefore agree to any mitigation whatever‡.

At the same time he was framing a severe answer to his brother, who had asked for it in these words:—

“ I beg you to tell me in brief what you would have me reply to the letter from Vincennes, which, I must confess, appears to me less arrogant than those which preceded it. But you are the right person to decide in this matter, and to give us all whatever directions you think proper§.”

Here follows an extract from the letter written by the Bailli to his nephew:—

“ Although this letter does not bear the same stamp of pride as your others, I am very far from seeing or believing you to be in that frame of mind which I could wish. You expect me to forget

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated March 4th 1780.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated March 16th 1780.

‡ Letter from the Marquis of Mirabeau to the Marquis of Marignane, dated April 24th 1780. “ Case for Counsel's Opinion for the Countess of Mirabeau,” &c., p. 37.

§ Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau, dated March 3rd 1780.

that instead of proving the pride and support of your father's age and mine, you have inflicted upon us every kind of sorrow. I cannot forget that you have the power of assuming any tone you like ; and that at the very same moment you contemplate some atrocious act, you utter the most honeyed accents. Such a system may succeed for once in duping an honest heart, but age has experience to guard it, and cannot be often deceived, nor for any length of time.

“ To seek to move the heart is the business of the stage ; but in actual life, you must persuade ; and there is no persuasion except in truth, justice, and reason.

“ Since you consider yourself able to make amends for your crimes, excuse the word, for it best represents what you term ‘ your errors ’ and ‘ your faults, ’ it is evident that you do not feel their enormity. Dismiss all idea of ‘ making amends. ’ That is not in the power of man. God may pardon you, so may your father ; but do not hope to regain public esteem, unless by a totally different course of life—one that shall be humble, retired, submissive, unassuming, and contented. In one of your letters you extol the natural law. What privileges does it give you ?—those of a wild beast. The social law, against which you rail, is the only one which confers any rights upon you. These indeed are connected with duties ; but the man who neglects his duties, ought to lose his rights. Yet it is upon the

latter alone that you found your pride. Take away this social law, and what common porter has not more rights than you have? You unhappily possess talent; and it is very possible that your pride is supported by that kind of superiority which you think you have over many others. But of what avail is superior talent, when it is not joined to correct understanding? Though it expresses all, relates all, and writes all on sand and air, it nevertheless conducts the heart, or suffers it to be led, into every vice, the body into every kind of licentiousness. Besides, do you think you have no equal, no superior? If there had never been men of genius before you came into the world, what would you be?

“ Finally, if my letter offends you, I am sorry for it, but I must write as conscience dictates. Your father has expressed his opinion publicly and plainly upon this subject. Your wife is the only person who has a right to demand your freedom. You affect not to fear impediments. Well, then, I have most sincerely pointed out your road *.”

The Marquis either was, or pretended to be, more than ever determined not to break, or even loosen, the fetters of his prisoner, without a formal application from the Countess.

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to Mirabeau, dated March 21st 1780.

“ Rely upon it, if there is any mode of taming this haughty temper of his, it is by humiliation. As surely as the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, so surely humiliation is the beginning of that victory which we obtain over ourselves. The prodigal son returned home, but not till after he had tended swine. Rely upon it there is no deeper humiliation for him than to be reduced to kneel to his wife, implore her forgiveness, and confess he owes every thing to her. This is the point to which we must bring him. He has hitherto made but small advance towards it; but let us wait. If his pride should kill him, never mind. He must do this or nothing*.”

Mirabeau, meanwhile, occasionally faltered in the resolution he had taken to await from his family alone, a pardon so obstinately refused. A hundred passages in the Vincennes correspondence prove that he complained often and bitterly, and not always unjustly, of the negociator Dupont. It must be acknowledged that the latter acted zealously and with devotedness; but his task was delicate and arduous. It is likewise true that, towards a client naturally so impatient as the prisoner, Dupont proved too lukewarm, tardy, and dogged; too self-important, too willing to act the cautious diplomatist, too ready to

* Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated May 15th 1780.

condemn Mirabeau in every case, and proclaim the equity of his father, to whom Dupont was attached by sincere affection, still more by the recollection of former services, and above all by that overweening dignity by which this haughty and determined man subjugated every one who approached him. Nor was Dupont acquainted with the worst of his designs.

For this reason Mirabeau sometimes entertained a thought of discontinuing his attempts at conciliation, and compelling his father to do him justice.

“ I do not promise you that I shall never attempt to bring my father into a court of justice, and there I may perhaps succeed. I will not die in this place like a madman *. They wish to keep me here until the day of judgment; and I am determined to take any steps for my liberty, except positive escape †. I therefore, very earnestly demand to be put into the hands, either of the ordinary judges, or of special commissioners, provided M. Lenoir be one of them, in order that my case, having been prepared and tried, I may come at last to know the reason of my seven years’ captivity. This, let me warn you, is not empty passion, but a

* Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. iv. p. 177.

† It is, indeed, deserving of remark, that Mirabeau, who, to be liberated from the Donjon of Vincennes, displayed so much perseverance, vigour, and that insinuating but lofty address which belonged to his character, and was worthy of it, never once conceived a project of escape, which would have been too mean a course for such a man.

firm and unchangeable resolution. I will not, must not be trifled with; and I shall confound them most deplorably, when I begin *."

Some days previously, Mirabeau had complained of having been too long deprived of Sophie's letters.

"It is six weeks since I received one, and before this, you used to send me two letters a month. If the foolish woman has written me any thing improper, send back her letter, or tell me the part to which you think I ought not to reply; but do not leave me in such dreadful suspense†."

It seems that the delay in the delivery of these letters, arose from an impediment caused by the child of the two captives. Sophie desired either to have her child with her, or else to place it at a school of her own selection. Madame de Ruffey resisted this wish with all her might; and the government sided

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated May 7th 1780. See likewise *Original Letters from Vincennes*, vol. iv. p. 198 and the following. Besides the preceding quotations, the following passage, in a letter written two years after, leads us to suspect that the attempt meditated by Mirabeau would not have proved unsuccessful.

"Depend upon it that Honoré was on the eve of procuring his enlargement without our interference."—*Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 27th 1782.*

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated May 1st 1781.

with her. Boucher applied to Mirabeau for his intercession with Sophie, and he refused.

“I beg leave,” he wrote, “to decline urging Sophie to do any such thing; because it is no part of my system to advise people against my own opinion; and because my own opinion is too strong to be explained to her by you, who have certain proprieties to respect, and certain duties to fulfil. I think, for my own part, that Sophie has but one plan to adopt, which is to go to law with her family, if she does not obtain satisfaction concerning her daughter. It would be iniquitous to thwart her wishes in this respect; and it is sometimes practicable to prevail over iniquity. You cannot yourself but feel that the excuse put forth by the family is weak and insincere; for they must of necessity know of the existence of this child. However, I will keep your secret, because I am bound to do in that respect what you wish. But I confess to you, that Sophie’s letter, which I have just received, is full of good sense and sound reasoning; there is no replying to it except by force, which she might elude, and even defeat. It would be a most atrocious measure to place her child anywhere against her consent and without her knowledge*.”

* Unpublished letter, already quoted, by Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated May 7th 1780.

This spirited letter appears to have roused in some degree the usually mild temper of M. Boucher.

“ There would be a vast field for contesting your theories ; but they do not concern me. What truly does concern me, is your correspondence, and you oblige me to tell you that you have swerved from its principle. It was permitted only on condition that you should give and exchange news of each other, and nothing more. Now, although you promise not to give advice, you do give it, and it is followed. Madame de Monnier’s family have witnessed her obstinacy on more than one occasion, and it is asserted that if you did not advise her she would certainly be more tractable. You may judge how deeply this assertion implicates you. I have not chosen, up to this time, to treat you with the usual rigour, which would justify me in detaining every letter in which you pass the stipulated line ; and I beg of you, unless you wish to injure me, and have no desire to prolong your correspondence, to forget business in your letters, and let all your thoughts dwell upon friendship *.”

The letters of this period show that the commandant, Rougemont, whom we take particular care not to mention so often as our documents and the corresponding dates of the Vincennes collection would

* Unpublished letter from M. Boucher to Mirabeau, dated May 12th 1780.

authorise our doing, made a great noise about a conversation that he had himself promoted between his sister-in-law and Mirabeau, and about some words uttered by the prisoner, through space, to a lady apparently living in the castle, and which caused her some subsequent annoyance. The particulars of this affair which have not been lost, are, we think, interesting; but not to interrupt the course of our narrative, we state them in a note *.

* “ The Countess of Spare mistook me for the Marquis of Bauveau, an evident proof that they seldom see me from such a distance, since she could not recognise me, well as she knows me. I answered her in simple negatives. M. de Rougemont knew this, and spoke out for once. I told him the real fact, which had been before related to him just as I stated it. He begged me never to speak to the Countess of Spare again. I promised the more willingly because she used to bring women to look at me as ‘the curious animal,’ and this offended me. Next day he wanted, without consulting me, to block up some windows which I did not open, but found opened; I opposed his wishes, and asked him whether he intended to prevent me from taking the air in the gallery, the walk which M. Lenoir has allowed me. He yielded, and there was an end of the matter. It is a fact, that after this I never again spoke to the Countess of Spare, and indeed to nobody but Madame de Ruault, all which he well knows. Yesterday, being the first fine day in spring, I went into the garden from seven till ten o’clock, and from two till the closing of the gate. M. de Rougemont, who knew nothing of this, or would not know it, perceiving some ladies, friends of the Countess of Spare, at the windows, took two fusileers and a serjeant, and went, thus escorted, to the house of that high-born dame. I was not aware of the circumstance, and what if I had? This morning he came to put on the buskin in my apartment; I answered him with moderation and good sense. Now, can you guess what I was about at the very time he was thinking of doing me a mischief (for

Notwithstanding the extent and minute details of this correspondence, we cannot discover any trace of the

he told me he would complain to the minister)? I had heard that the Countess of Spare, very indignant at an insult which she calls 'public,' wrote to the minister to claim a 'public atonement,' and I hastened to apprise Madame de Rougemont that she might interpose. This is my ill-nature! Certainly I wanted to avoid anything unpleasant; for I really pity the mania of this poor man, and feel an interest for his family; I would therefore gladly have prevented the whole castle from enjoying his confusion."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated April 1st 1780.*

"I believe that this event has *made some noise*. When you put together, or leave together, a couple of madmen, who are capable of entering the house of a woman of quality with a posse of soldiers behind them, on pretence that they had spoken to a prisoner who had not been in the galleries the whole day, certainly that *ought to make a noise*. If there had been any men at the Countess of Spare's, they would probably have sallied forth, sword in hand, and attacked M. de Rougemont and his guard. Moreover, the Parliament would have taken it up; for you must know, gentlemen viziers and demi-viziers, gentleman gods and demi-gods, that you are not yet so absolute, in this our Turkey-land, as to conduct a guard of soldiers into a private dwelling-house without an express mandate from the king. But the fact is, that since this absurd piece of brutality I have not spoken to any one. I never spoke more than three times to the Countess of Spare. I never pledge my word except on serious occasions, and shall always consider it both a duty and a pleasure to submit to you."—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated May 7th 1780.*

Boucher wrote to the prisoner, June 8th 1780:—

"They tell me for certain that you have spoken to Madame de Ruault, and your conversation itself is repeated. You must know full well how contrary all this is to discipline, and that the consequences might be dangerous."

This accusation did not remain unnoticed; besides Mirabeau had written his answer beforehand.

pretended intimacies which Mirabeau is said to have formed at Vincennes with women who either resided in the castle, or visited there. Among these, as it has been basely asserted, was one of the first, most illustrious, and most innocent victims of the revolution. We give the lie with earnest conviction to these gratuitous and barefaced calumnies, leaving the blame and opprobrium

“About a month ago Madame de Ruault, sister-in-law to M. de Rougemont, complimented me on the beauty of my voice and my manner of singing. I acknowledged her kindness, as in duty bound. Shortly after she thought proper to intermingle a few sounds; this led to conversations on trifling matters, with a person who could not be suspected by M. de Rougemont; and he said nothing on the subject.”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated April 1st 1779.*

Mirabeau afterwards made a more pointed reply to this letter from Boucher:—

“Do you know who Madame de Ruault is? M. de Rougemont’s sister-in-law: and it was at his own request that I once spoke to her. Such is the occasion seized by this most false, most base, and most wicked of men, to accuse me of having spoken; and that too at the very moment he had come to entreat me, in the presence of Vallage, not to despatch a letter of complaint to M. Lenoir, which this same Vallage had heard me read. My friend, this man puts me in a passion; I told him long ago that I neither did, nor would acknowledge in him any power over me; and by Heavens! I’ll tell him so again, and make him feel it before the king’s commissioner. This insolent mountebank said to me, with eyes swimming in tears—‘My dear Count, let me owe you the obligation of reconciling me to my family;’ and he now states—‘he has spoken to my sister-in-law!’ Ah! my dear friend, study people, and do not weigh my testimony against that of a man whom you cannot esteem!”—*Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated June 9th 1780.*

which they excite to the writers who have published them to the world, and are assuredly guilty, some of credulous levity, and others of foul and wilful slander. These tales, as atrocious as they are absurd, are without the slightest foundation, whether they relate to the period of Mirabeau's detention in the Donjon, where his rigorous confinement allowed neither egress or ingress, or whether they refer to a time posterior to his enlargement, and are supposed to have taken place within the castle ; for the truth is Mirabeau remained there but a fortnight at most *, and went directly afterwards to M. Boucher's.

It was, we confess, to introduce this statement, which may be relied upon, that we mentioned the annoyance given to Mirabeau by the commandant, on account of two ladies. We also intend to exhibit another specimen of Mirabeau's excellent disposition. Two months after, forgetting the wrongs of which he had often justly complained, he took great pains to serve this same Rougemont, whom he had previously treated with such merited contempt.

“ What think you of my trusty friend Rougemont, who has got me to draw up a huge statement for him?—and I am fool enough to do it † ! ”

* Observations on a Defamatory Libel, entitled “ Case and Counsel's Opinion for the Countess of Mirabeau,” &c. p. 70.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated August 18th 1780.

Even the gentle Sophie was astonished to hear of this.

“So you have the great advantage of troubling yourself about the business of that fellow Rougemont. It was really singular his asking you! You are too good in fatiguing yourself to write statements for that odious Rougemont*.”

Let us here insert another extract, of a higher order, which does honour to Mirabeau. Deeply afflicted at a calamity which we shall shortly describe, he wrote thus to Boucher.

“My friend, you know how sadly I stand in need of

* Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated September 2nd 1780. To show all the merit of this act of kindness, we adduce, with very close dates (a space of nine days over a month), some fresh proofs of the inquisitorial annoyances and useless rigour practised by the commandant on Mirabeau. The two first instances occur in a letter written on the 11th of September 1780, inserted in the Vincennes collection, vol. iv. p. 276, and in another regarding the denial of a *glass to shave with*, for which Mirabeau had applied. “Lettres de Cachet,” vol. ii. pp. 70, 71. As for the second example, we give it here:—

“The Count asks to have rings put upon his window curtain, but I have answered him, that the rules do not allow us to have any in his room, on account of the mischief which might result from anything made of iron; and that, without breaking this rule, we might substitute for these iron rings some strong loops of thread, to slide over a wooden rod propped by two wooden pegs.”—*Unpublished letter from M. de Rougemont to M. Boucher, dated October 9th 1780.*

What more could they have done had he been a prisoner of state or a man condemned to imprisonment for life? Every one knew at this time the resolution already formed to release Mirabeau.

comfort : do comfort me then. I too mean to do you a service, by fulfilling the sacred duty incumbent on every man, of defending his fellow-creatures. Now is it just that, at a time when the king, by an edict which does him honour, has ordered that all prisoners, including even the convicts doomed to the wheel, shall enjoy light, air, and other wholesome comforts, a wretch who is only mad, and harmlessly mad, I mean that poor charnel-house writer who has called forth your pity, should continue for whole months without light and air, shut up in a dark cell in which he is attacked with scurvy. From his cell I saw removed, this very morning, a barrow full of absolute manure upon which he used to sleep, and it had never been changed before? Oh! my friend! it is not you who command such treatment; but it is you who will prevent it now that you know of its existence! You it was who ordered the poor wretch to be better fed, and I bless your charity, for he was once, seven months together, kept upon bread and water, except the broth which the kind-hearted turnkey used to give him by stealth; and this poor diet was immediately followed by scurvy*.”

Amid every species of occupation Mirabeau continued to write to his uncle.

“ I do not complain of your lecturing me : be assured

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to M. Boucher, dated June 8th 1780.

that my greatest ambition is to convince you. I suffer severe pain, I assure you ; part of my ailment would certainly give way to a different mode of life, for I am naturally very robust ; but my sight is going ; and as reading and study are my only comforts in this place, I cannot bring myself to spare the little sight still left me. I am not sure that I have the stone, but am quite sure that I am threatened with it. Alas ! my only happiness at present consists in my uncertainty of the nature and continuance of my complaints. I had rather doubt and suffer ; but this strange kind of happiness is cruel agony. The officers of this establishment have exerted themselves, with the greatest kindness, to procure for me the best exercise that can be had here ; but you must know that the only garden I have to roam in is but forty yards long, and fifteen wide, and my room is but twelve feet square !

“ I have no longer any hesitation as to what course I shall pursue to atone for, or at least to palliate, and obliterate the errors for which I have so dearly paid. You have advised me, and I will be governed by you. I strive to take the imprint of your mind. I always loved it : and would to God I had never wandered from its track ! Alas ! my passions have given a vicious tendency to some endowments intended for the formation of virtue ; but the principle is not extinct—it only slumbers, and has been vitiated. Believe me it is not extinct !

“ I received your letter at the same time, and some-

what late, also one from M. de Marignane, a copy of which I enclose.

“ I send likewise a copy of my replies, and am weak enough to think, from the state of my own heart, that they ought to produce some effect upon my father-in-law as well as upon my wife. I own to you that if I am disappointed, it will give me a moral pain much greater than the physical sufferings to which my error will expose me.

“ I am troubled with a wish to write to my father. I have not yet done so ; for I should like to be backed by some good letters from Provence. This is your advice, and I ought to follow it. But if I should not receive any, for I must be used to, and prepared for every kind of disappointment, do you think it would be impossible to induce my father to accept the half consent of M. de Marignane? If M. de Marignane will not allow me to enter his daughter's presence, one *lettre de cachet* is as effective as another. One which should limit my confinement to a certain space, would be as good as that which shuts me up in a dungeon. It would not require the separation he threatens me with, disagreeable to both families, and to which I still hope, and am almost convinced, he would not have recourse, if, which God forbid, he compelled me to speak plainly. I had rather, much rather, open my heart to peace, attachment, and gratitude, with which he and his daughter may yet inspire me. Pardon me,

my dear uncle, I fatigue and weary you, but I have no hope except through you * !”

Who could believe that this letter would have kindled the anger of the Marquis of Mirabeau ?

“ That madman’s letter is just as bad as the rest of them, and I feel my hopes expire in consequence. The most horrible point in it is, the invectives he constantly indulged in against his wife, and these are so frequent that they shake both his faith and ours. How frigid are his arguments !—how insane ! What is to be done with such a man ? I think him worse than Sade †, and some others confined in the same fortress. As for this sentence, ‘ if, which God forbid, he compelled me to speak plainly,’ it appears to me to hold out a threat of another scene à la Moans ‡ ”

The just and benevolent Bailli, whose prejudices were not so strong, endeavoured to dissuade his brother.

“ I must confess that after reading your son’s last letter of the 22nd May, I cannot perceive, as you do, that it destroys your hope. God forbid that I should pretend to see more clearly than a father ; but the words

* Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to his uncle, the Bailli, dated May 22nd 1780.

† The author of “ Justine,” at that time a prisoner in the Donjon of Vincennes, where he was kept for twenty-nine years, for having put in action that monstrous romance, which he published towards the end of 1791.

‡ Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated June 27th 1780.

you quote have not the meaning you attribute to them. Pray consider that I am not the person he would have made choice of as a confidant for ‘a scene à la Moans,’ if he even intended, or wished to make us fear it. The plain fact is, that well knowing the laws of this country, being also aware of the sayings and doings of his wife, and of her weakness with regard to himself, he believes that a separation cannot be brought about ; and I think so too, for nothing would render it definitive in Provence *.”

Not satisfied with having shielded his nephew by this favourable interpretation, and by concealing from him his father’s cruel prejudices, the Bailli wrote to him in the following terms :—

“ Although you inform me that you do not find fault with my lecturing you, I shall abstain from it for two reasons : first, it would be needless to lecture a convert ; secondly, if you are endeavouring to take me by surprise, that would be equally useless. At all events, I have pointed out to you, to the best of my ability, the surest and even the only means of alleviating your distress. I am persuaded that your father will never do more than assent to the request of your wife’s family ; and to speak to you candidly, I would do the same in his place. Still, since you state that you are troubled with a wish to write to him, I must say that I

* Unpublished letter from the Bailli to the Marquis of Mirabeau dated July 8th 1780.

see no objection to your doing so, unless your Agamemnon's pride should whisper to you that you were about to strike a shadow, and was hurt by the apprehension. For my part, I see no humiliation in any step taken towards a father. This way of thinking may appear rather antiquated at a period so immoral as the present; but I am old, and see no sufficient reason to correct my notions on this head*."

The day after Mirabeau had written to the Bailli the letter dated May 22nd, a dreadful calamity befel this tender father, who, amid the most stormy events, in his recreation as in his studies, had always been reminded of his children, whether by joy or by grief, by persevering misfortune, or by transitory bliss; who was continually thinking of their wants, the perils of their childhood, their education, and the chances of their future life; who, from his youth upwards, had adopted the plan of making extracts in great public libraries, with a view to collect materials for an extensive system of education for his son; who, within the walls of a prison, read and extracted hundreds of volumes of works foreign to his private studies, in order that he might write, for the benefit of his daughter, a special treatise on "Inoculation*."

* See Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. i. p. 215; vol. ii. pp. 412, 413, 433; vol. iii. pp. 148, 260, 375, 429, 439, 460, 508, 552, 594; vol. iv. pp. 73, 77, 142, 155, 202, 331. See also unpublished letters from Mirabeau to Vitry, pp. 6, 10.

The daughter whom he had by Sophie died whilst being weaned, from convulsions brought on by teething.

“Yesterday morning the Count heard the news which I had been charged to communicate to him. He was deeply affected. He sent, this morning, for the surgeon, who found him in the greatest agitation, and in a fever. He feels more for Madame de Monnier than for himself, and he testified great anxiety about the fittest mode of acquainting her with her loss *.”

This state of anxiety was vividly expressed by the prisoner.

“Good God! what would you have me say to this wretched mother, who finds in a moment the weak foundation overthrown, upon which her tender solicitude had built the temple of her happiness! Alas! were I to see her, I might weep with her, and thus mitigate the terrible dispensation. But I must smother my grief in solitude, and yet impart it to her I was fated to endure the most afflictive trials!

“My friend, it was the mother that I loved in this child. I did not know the latter, but I felt how necessary she was to her mother, being the only tie

* Unpublished letter from M. de Rougemont to M. Boucher, dated May 26th 1780.

that bound her to life. It was the only possession she had left and even this was begrudged her. Let me die if I know how to communicate to her the fatal news; and yet I shudder lest she should know it through another channel; lest Diot* should inform her of it. If I hasten not to prepare her, this will certainly occur, and she will be still more overcome. I am therefore resolved the first to strike the chord of grief. But how shall I begin the sad story, and tell her that all her projects concerning this child were but a dream; and that nature which has made it our fate to survive her, has spared the poor babe a world of trouble? Alas! this nature has but one fault, which is to give us life, with its few pleasures, and its many pangs!!!! Oblige me, my friend, on this cruel occasion, by forwarding my letters to her, one after the other. Let me probe her wound, and endeavour to calm her sufferings. It is, in every light you may view it in, a painful duty which I am going to fulfil†.”

The following day he despatched the eloquent letter

* Mademoiselle Diot, frequently mentioned in the “*Letters from Vincennes*.” Some very gross particulars concerning her (vol. iv. p. 144 and following) have been inserted by the slanderous Manuel, who, desirous of suiting his publication to the obscene taste of the times, has presented them *as if addressed to Sophie*, though really contained in a letter *written to Boucher*; and which original letter is now in our possession.

† Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated May 28th 1780.

inserted in the Vincennes collection, vol. iv. page 207. In it he took measures to lighten the first blow Sophie was to receive.

“ I have been relieved by a wholesome emission of tears, which came and unlocked my heart a little. Alas! it is the mother only that I pity, though I am as wretched as herself. Will you be so kind as to send her my letter immediately, lest she should first receive one from Dijon ; and do not add a single word of your own. I want to be sure that she reads my letter before she learns the dreadful tidings *.”

The affectionate prudence of Mirabeau proved useless.

“ What a frightful calamity, O my beloved ! Our child is no more ! I shall never behold her again ! and you never saw her ! What have we to suffer in future ? Alas ! I had almost a presentiment of the event, and the last letter from our good angel made me spend the night in tears. But does he not deceive us ? —was it really from convulsions that we lost her ? You recommend me to take care of my health, and your own is in a bad state. I can well believe it. What a fearful shock have we sustained ! Yet you think only of my health. You forget your own pain to think of me How greatly was I affected when I learned all the precautions which your love for me had

* Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated May 1780.

led you to take! Fate defeated your expectations; the box arrived two hours before the circuitous communication. I am always so eager to have a letter!—and although I hardly expected any, I could not be easy till the boy had been to the post-office. Ysabeau * arrived about five o'clock, and found me choking with the agony of tearless despair. Your tender letter soon forced a passage for my tears. He remained with me some time, and said all that was proper to encourage my tears and relieve my heart. . . . Your gloomy note, had it come alone, would have disclosed all our unhappiness; but my heart is not less grateful for your attentive tenderness. It is no fault of any one that I discovered this terrible event †.

“ I have just received your second note. Alas! you want to remove my fears for your health, and I see too plainly that it is in a bad state. Let us die together; but do you live for the present. Oh! live, since I too support my grief, and will live with you, and for you alone. It was only for you that I did live before, for it was my Gabriel that I loved in my daughter. It is a part of him that has been torn from me; it is more than a limb of yours that they have carried to the

* A skilful and benevolent surgeon who attended the Convent of Saint Claire, at Gien, and whom we have mentioned in the Introduction to this work.

† Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated June 2nd 1780.

grave. O God! ought we so soon to have been deprived of it! She was given to us by Fate, only to cause that perpetual grief we feel for her loss, to suffer incessant anxiety, and after all to see her taken from us! No matter! I am pleased to have had her, for I have had the bliss of making you a father, of bearing in my womb the fruit of our loves. I have been a mother but you! who never saw her!—who never enjoyed the delight of pressing her in your arms!—why are you always more unfortunate than I? Nothing now remains for us but one another. If any event should remove us from this world, we shall leave no being to suffer for our loss! Write to me, speak of your anguish, let me see it all! Into whose bosom but mine can you pour your sorrows? Where else can you look for consolation? You have restrained yourself too long. You increase your affliction, but in vain do you strive to hide any thing from me. I feel it as much as you. There is no loss but yours which I could not bear; that would leave me no remedy but death. Your daughter was very dear to me, but you must know how much dearer you are yourself. And yet what have we lost in this beloved child? Alas! every thing. I expected from her so much happiness for both! Still could we comfort each other, we should suffer less, and during a shorter time. But we are

denied every thing, even the happiness of weeping together *! . . . My poor friend, you have been made to drink the cup even to its dregs. It was adding to your grief, to force you into contact with the first moment of mine; it was increasing its bitterness. There is no doubt, however, that the means you adopted to lessen my sorrow were successful. Your letter to our good angel was so full of feeling that it found a vent for my grief, and prevented too severe a shock. Besides, I felt a hope that you had said to yourself the same consolatory things that you wrote to me As you state so tenderly, you have but one Sophie left! Yes, yes, it was you I loved in my daughter; and it is a part of you I am grieving for. But, I agree with you: we are afflicted for each other; and for her too, for you know we wished to make her happy—that we were preparing to do so—but we might have died instead of her, and left her in the hands of our enemies. Thus it is far better for her to be dead than with them. Does the loss of our poor child disgust you with life†? If it has become hateful, speak, I am ready; but I confess, I should bitterly regret any sacrifices which might cost more than their

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated June 4th 1780.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 10th 1780.

worth. Do not bid me attend to my health unless you will attend to yours. I am no longer necessary to my daughter, and if life is a burden to you, my own is already far gone. At any rate, your health is so much shattered, that I, who will not outlive you, shall always have enough of health left*. It is very true that I should have considered it the most frightful calamity had we been cruelly separated, when arrested, before we had again dwelt together; then I really believe we should not have had the courage to resist our fate. We should neither have desired to live, nor been capable of living. How much should we have lost? Ten months together make many hours of bliss! And our little darling, whom we no longer possess, but have possessed: ah! it is a great joy even to have possessed her! I have often thought, since our captivity, that it would be dreadful misery to know the future, if it were possible merely to know, and not to change it. For when we were in Holland, our softest moments would have been haunted with the fear of the fatal day which was to tear us asunder; and instead of all the pleasing hopes we nurtured of our Gabrielle Sophie, we should never have thought of anything but her death †!"

A circumstance in some degree tended to alleviate

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated June 15th 1780.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 20th 1780.

Sophie's grief. This was a mark of concern from Madame de Ruffey, for whom she had always felt both affection and respect, weakened indeed but not destroyed by the ascendancy of passion.

“ Sister Victoire has shown me a letter she has just received from my mother, who tells her that she has just heard of my daughter's death ; that she fears the effect of this misfortune upon my health, but dares not mention the subject to me, not knowing whether I am aware of my loss. In short, Madame de Ruffey begs her to try and dissipate my sorrow. She appears very uneasy and greatly afflicted on my account. Her letter is extremely affectionate ; and I will own to you that it excites my gratitude*.”

We do not continue our extracts to prove a fact which must of course recur in every letter, and that every minute gave birth to impressions as natural as they were painful. But as repetitions would weary the reader, we conclude with this sentence :—

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated June 17th 1780. This event makes it unnecessary for us to say more concerning the offspring of these unfortunate lovers ; we therefore feel ourselves relieved from the duty of dwelling upon a fact mentioned several times in the “ Letters from Vincennes,” namely, the proceedings instituted at Pontarlier, by the Marquis of Monnier, or rather by Madame de Valdahon, to dispute the claims of Gabrielle Sophie to the title of daughter of the Marquis of Monnier. Such particulars would only be tedious, for they lost all interest, the moment the child's death put an end to the fears to which her birth had given rise.

“ Had I learned our misfortune through our private correspondence, that important secret would almost to a certainty have been divulged *.”

We have already spoken of this correspondence, carried on without Boucher’s knowledge, by the address of the prisoners. We may judge how active it was by the following passage —

“ It is just a year since we began to write these secret letters, and I have been counting them all; by which it appears that we have despatched, on both sides, you as well as I, three hundred and sixty-seven, without counting good angel or the parcels. From this, I gather that we may make our minds easy as to the risk of discovery which we began to fear †.”

* Unpublished letter from Sophie to Mirabeau, dated June 22nd 1780.

† Unpublished letter from the same to the same, dated June 19th 1780.

APPENDIX TO BOOK V.

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORTS OF INSPECTOR MURON TO THE LIEUTENANT GENERAL OF POLICE.

“ON my arrival at Dijon, I went to Madame la Présidente Ruffey, to receive her further instructions. She gave me to understand that there was in the town a certain Chevalier Maçon, a half-pay officer, a friend of the *Sieur Mirabeau's*, and his companion and confidant. She further stated, that if any person could manage to become intimate with the said Maçon, and obtain his confidence, the place of the said *Sieur Mirabeau's* concealment might be drawn from him *”.

The inspectors availed themselves of this information.

“The *Sieur Brugnère* went and lodged at the same inn as this Maçon, and found means to become intimate with him, by pretending to have the same inclinations, and by going with him to fencing schools, billiard rooms, and similar places †.”

The inspectors having discovered some traces, hastened to Geneva, and found—

“That the *Sieur Mirabeau* had arrived there on the 5th of June, but had left it immediately for Thonon, where two females, in men's clothes, having joined him, they all proceeded together to Chambéry, and thence to Turin. From Thonon we could not ascertain the route they had pursued; for they used a thousand stratagems to

* Report, dated from Lyons, July 11th 1776.

† Same Report.

conceal it from us. After three days of incredible fatigue, we succeeded in finding the coach-conductor with whom they had travelled. We are now going to follow them, and have reason to believe we shall not be long in overtaking them *.

This hope was not realised.

“What assists us a little, I mean Brugnère and myself, is that the *Sieur Mirabeau* and his retinue, though armed like a party of smugglers, have further purchased pistols, and swords, and even a hanger with a pistol concealed in the hilt. This we learned at Geneva. They take abominable cross-about roads, to avoid passing through France.

“After having gained all possible intelligence at Geneva, we set out from Seyssel, a town partly in Savoy, partly in France, through which the *Sieur Mirabeau* had passed, and following their track step by step, we reached Lyons, where these gentlemen adopted the most mysterious measures, and the most impenetrable stratagems to enter the city. Thus we were again at fault. Having renewed our wearisome inquiries, we made out that one *St. Jean*, a confidential servant of *Madame de Cabris*, had assisted in concealing the *Sieur Mirabeau*, and had attended him in his place of concealment. This *St. Jean* was now the servant of a certain *M. de Brianson*, an officer in the infantry regiment *Royal Roussillon*. We had *St. Jean* followed, and his actions watched. We learned that he had involved himself in a petty broil, and would appear next day at the police-office. We accordingly went thither, and put *M. de la Rochette* in our secret. We told him how urgent it was for the success of our mission, to draw the necessary information from *St. Jean*. The said *St. Jean* came to the office, and we questioned him. Not being on his guard, and seeing us besides so well informed as we were from our preceding exertions, he concealed nothing. It would have spoiled all to have dismissed *St. Jean*; he would then have apprised the *Marchioness of Cabris*, and she would have acquainted her brother; for it is she, not *Mdlle. Raucour* †, who had come to Geneva to join him, together with *Mdlle.*

* Report, dated from Geneva, July 20th 1776.

† A slight resemblance in person and features had deceived the French president at Geneva, *M. D'Henir*, and led him to believe that *Madame de Cabris*

Delatour de Beaulieu, both attired in men's clothes. It was of the greatest importance to make sure of St. Jean; so I thought it expedient to arrest him, and I received orders for M. de Borry, commanding at Pierre-en-Size, to allow the prisoner to be shut up.

"This was the only place where the secret would have been safe, and the least disturbance would have baffled all we had done, and prevented what we have yet to do. The Sieur Mirabeau, on leaving his friend Brianson, who, I believe, is a worthless man, confided to St. Jean that he was going to Lorgue, in Provence, Brianson's birth-place, and that subsequently Brianson would accompany him to Nice, whence he intended to embark for Genoa, where he purposed staying a month. We start for Avignon to-night; and have been questioning the boatmen who took them*.

"Brugnière and I are at present at Antibes. We have traced the Count of Mirabeau as far as Frejus, and from Frejus, with uncertainty, to Antibes. We shall set out for Nice to-morrow morning, whence he may have sailed for Genoa, or perhaps for England, as he had sixteen days' start of us†."

This chase also proved unsuccessful; and the inspectors returned to Aix.

"I had the honour to inform you of what M. Brugnière and I had done, as far as Lyons, and what we had hoped to accomplish in consequence of St. Jean's declarations. We followed the Count of Mirabeau's track down the Rhone from Lyons, where he had taken boat to Avignon. Here he took post horses, having hired them half a league out of the town. He also purchased a pair of pistols,

was Mademoiselle Raucour (of the Comédie Française), at that time a fugitive (*Same Report, dated July 20th 1776.*) But this mistake did not extend to the Marquis of Mirabeau.

"A famous adventuress has joined his party, with another woman; she is supposed to be Raucour, the actress; I do not believe it, for I know the likeness to the Lyons lady (Madame de Cabris)." — *Unpublished letter from the Marquis to the Bailli of Mirabeau, dated July 27th 1776.*

"She said she was going to Lyons for the benefit of her health, and rode forward at a devil of a rate" (*Letter from the same to the same, dated August 10th 1776*), "disguised in man's clothes." — *Ibid., August 22nd 1776.*

* Muron's Report, dated from Lyons, July 26th 1776.

† Report from the same, dated from Antibes, August 3rd 1776.

and after that, returned to Avignon concealed in the cabriolet, to take letters to the post-office. He left the city at night-fall. At this time, the fair of Beaucaire was being held, and the cabriolet was so lost in the crowd, that we found it impossible to pursue its track. Nevertheless, St. Jean, the servant, whom I had been cautious enough to keep in custody, pointed out the road they had taken, and I recovered the scent at Brignole. We came as far as Luc, where we had to take several measures to prevent discovery, since Luc is only three leagues from Lorgues, the abode of M. Brianson, who is the bosom friend of the Count of Mirabeau. We found means to introduce ourselves to a lawyer of the name of Marsaut, an honest man, who gave us every possible information; and as we found him to be a man of discretion, we let him entirely into our secret. Marsaut took us to the village of Lorgues, where he was born, and has estates. There he introduced us to this same Brianson, with whom we supped. We gave ourselves out for Lyons merchants, travelling, one to Genoa and to Italy, the other only to Genoa, and who intended returning to Provence together by the same road. This was the best way to draw out Brianson, and induce him to give us a letter for his friend, since he might thus receive an answer. We found it quite hopeless to attempt gaining any information from him; but the innkeeper informed us that Brianson had arrived on the 16th at night, with an individual calling himself the Chevalier Brie*; that on the 19th these two gentlemen had set out on foot at six o'clock in the evening, without any luggage, and Brianson had returned alone; that his companion was supposed to have taken the mail at Vidauban, or at Muy, in order to embark at St. Raphael for Italy, and reach Rome, where he said he wanted to be; that this Chevalier Brie had been recognised by several of the inhabitants of Lorgues as the Count of Mirabeau, and even by the innkeeper himself. We went on to the village of Vidauban, where we were informed that he had not been seen either at the post-office, or any where else. At Muy we were told the same story, so that we lost all trace of him at that place, even when we seemed the most sure. We hoped to obtain some tidings at Frejus, since St. Raphael is within gun-shot of it.

* Name of an estate belonging to the Marchioness of Mirabeau.

There we saw M. Maunier, a commissioner of the navy, for whom we had a letter of recommendation, and who made every inquiry, both at Frejus and St. Raphael. He even sent people along the coast as far as Cannes and Grasse, but could learn nothing. He gave us a letter to the naval commissioner at Cannes, a neighbouring port. The same inquiry was there set on foot, but without better success. In fine, Sir, we resolved to push on to Nice, in Savoy, thinking that as it was a foreign territory, the Count of Mirabeau might be less upon his guard. We were provided with letters of recommendation for the consul, who took the trouble to go himself to the lieutenant-general of police, and every imaginable inquiry was made, but it led to nothing except the following indication:—

“ When you quit Provence to enter the country of Nice, you have to ford the Var, a torrent almost always dangerous, and often not fordable. It is sometimes a quarter of a league across at its greatest width, and extremely rapid at all seasons of the year. The danger, however, is always exaggerated by report, so that travellers who have to cross it, never speak of it but with alarm. On each bank are stationed a number of robust men, who make it their business to convey travellers over, by going first, and fencing them round with strong sticks, to show the depth of water, which often varies several times during the day. At present there is no danger whatever to be feared; but the fordmen, who are so many quacks, and live at the expense of timid travellers, take good care to go before them, and increase their alarm. The men who assisted us across the torrent, told us that they had offered their services to a gentleman whose appearance agreed with our description of the man we are looking for; but he refused their assistance, and got across by following the country-women, who went over without guides. They added that he shunned being looked at too closely. Having made more particular inquiries, we learned that this gentleman had entered a mean wine-shop some distance off, and refreshed himself; that he had a gold box, with the portrait of a female upon the lid:—in short, they gave the same description we had before obtained. He had asked them if they knew at Nice of any ship ready to sail for Italy; they told him of one going to England; and that Nice presented opportunities for sailing to all parts of

Italy. They further informed us that the gentleman had departed, and had crossed the Var just above where we were, as I have the honour to inform you, Sir. I must make known to you that there is no police at Nice ; and that strangers go in and out of it without hindrance. We entered the town and left it, returned to it, and left it again by other gates, and not a question was asked. Yet we were told, in answer to the inquiries we made there, that an unknown individual had embarked at Villefranche, another little port adjoining Nice. The description of his person perfectly agreed with ours, except that he then had on a red coat, whereas the Count of Mirabeau has hitherto worn a green, brown, or dark grey coat. He sailed for England. Notwithstanding this intelligence, we have sent to the mountains, people acquainted with all the cross roads. M. Brugnière rides a mule accustomed to these frightful hills ; he is accompanied by a guide, and has made every possible search. In a word, Sir, we have done all that the human mind can conceive, and during the most intolerable heat. We are overcome with fatigue ; our legs are swollen, and we are proceeding to Lyons, where we hope you will be so good as to allow us three days' rest, for we are quite exhausted.

“ The Marquis of Mirabeau certainly warned me that his son was marvellously clever. He was advised by the Marchioness of Cabris, his sister ; it is therefore by no means wonderful that his schemes have succeeded. Further, the consul at Nice told us that the couriers from Rome and Italy, who take shipping either at Antibes or Nice, are never examined, and that they take advantage of this freedom, to carry passengers over with them. He may have availed himself of such an opportunity *.”

* Report by Muron, dated from Aix, August 8th 1776.

BOOK VII.

WE find in the Vincennes collection of Letters, and more positively still in the letters we possess, a proof that attempts were made, towards the beginning of 1779, and repeated, with much perseverance, to bring back Sophie to her husband. Madame de Ruffey, who, contrary to her own opinion, took up the matter with an active but prudent and cautious earnestness, apprehended various difficulties. She wrote thus to her daughter :—

“ Now that you are asking for what you have long refused, you, doubtless, would not return to your husband except with a view to recover your rights, and then leave him a second time—thus affording the public a second example of scandalous conduct. I presume that the two parties are as tired as their families of being exposed to reports which both are anxious should be forgotten. The Abbé Pourcheresse sees your husband now but seldom: he says it was unfortunate that his daughter had so much gained the upper hand of him that it was impossible to effect a reconciliation, which religion ordains, as well to put an end to public scandal as to repair the injury done by the husband to his wife, by judicial proceedings; that it was not possible even to write to the Marquis of Monnier, because his daughter interfered in everything, and because he is blind, inexorable, and fearfully obstinate. Besides, you can neither gain access to him nor write to him, were it even practicable. So great is his daughter's influence over him, that he would at one moment promise what he would not perform an hour later; and for fear of surprise he will not sign his name to anything unless his daughter is by his side. How can any thing be risked where there is so much weakness? It might produce a good effect were you to run the risk of kneeling before him; but with a blind man this posture would lose half its effect, for sight assists very materially in kindling emotion; and if we find no feeling in this man, he may allow you to be arrested at his house, before the reconciliation is sure. On this point there is everything to fear. By the tenour of the law proceedings we may judge of Madame de Valdahon's influence, also that you were the victim they had fixed upon, and that your ruin was contemplated. Thus, every one being devoted to

him, whilst you, having none to support you but so weak a man, it would be incurring the risk of a prison, a thing I never would allow *."

Sophie had less doubt than her mother of the success of this measure; she determined, therefore, to write to her husband a very submissive letter, which we insert below †. But she did not communicate her intention to Mirabeau, who was opposed to it ‡ from a similar feeling of generosity: we say a similar feeling, because there

* Letter from Madame de Ruffey to Sophie, dated April 29th 1779.

† April 27th 1779. " Shall I, Sir, be more fortunate with this letter than with several others I have already written to you, none of which you have answered? Still I shall never grow weary of repeating to you how much I regret having given you offence. My disposition to confess my faults is a guarantee that I wish to expiate them. I am overcome with grief, Sir, at having displeased you: tell me by what means I may atone for the past. Religion points out to me that it is a duty to ask your forgiveness, and inclination urges me to seek it. The more I owe to you, Sir, the stronger will become the tie which binds me to you. My only thought is how to recover the place in your heart which I have forfeited, and from which I do not desire to exclude any one; it is good and generous enough to permit us all to occupy our proper places in it. You will do me the justice to remember that this was all I ever wished. It is not the weariness of solitude, Sir, which induces me to appeal to your kindness: my family have spared no pains to make this solitude endurable. But I wish to be obliged to you alone, and for this I am endeavouring to excite your generosity in my behalf. My misfortunes and transgressions have matured my mind, and I may therefore assure you that you will now find all you desire in my disposition and conduct. If you ever loved, Sir, the woman who is bound to you by an indissoluble tie, you cannot have altogether closed your heart against her. The father of the prodigal son excused the faults of his youth, and took him back with goodness, even with tenderness. Why may I not expect as much from him whose name I bear—from a husband full of pity, whose anger and repugnance are overwhelming grievances to my heart? Give me then, I conjure you, Sir, some signs of returning pity; Heaven will requite you a hundred fold for the happiness you may confer upon me. Nor shall I long continue a burden to you: my health is so shattered by anguish of mind that I easily perceive I have not long to live. I shall see my end, however, approach without repining, if you recall me, and allow me to die in your presence. This act of mercy which I implore you to grant me, Sir, shall not exceed the everlasting gratitude of your wife."

‡ See Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. iii. pp. 256, 376, 387, 394.

is no mode to explain this step of Sophie's, unless she wanted to purchase the liberation of her lover by the sacrifice of herself. He mentions, in a letter written October 3rd 1779 *, that a friend of the Ruffey family came to see him at Vincennes. This friend was M. de Marville †, who, it seems, wished to ascertain the influence which the prisoner possessed over Sophie, and prevail on him to use that influence in effecting a reconciliation with the Marquis of Monnier. We abstain from stating particulars with the more readiness because we find the event recorded in another letter, which appears to us as explicit as it is interesting, and extracts from which we here insert without hesitation, because the letter has never appeared in print.

“ I am tenderly grateful to you, my dear friend ‡, for your obliging letter, and affectionate intentions. But here we are returned to the very elements of my case.

“ To settle all doubts on this matter, I must tell you that I would advise Sophie to return to her husband, if he fixed that as the condition for withdrawing his action. The withdrawal should however precede her return ; for he is not a man of sufficient honour for her to trust to his word, unless she is prepared for a scene against which the law might indeed protect her, but which would still be painful. I will go further, and assert, upon my honour, that I should have great fears for her life in that house.

“ But I will neither say nor believe that she can with prudence or dignity run to beg the forgiveness of a man who, if he had the least sense of delicacy, would not now persecute her, but would never take her back. Nor will I allow that she ought to confess herself an adulteress ; for I swear, by everything sacred, that she is not, and never was his wife §, and that if I were placed in the same

* See Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. iii. p. 366 and following.

† M. de Marville was a friend and relative of the Ruffey family ; he was proprietor of the castle (built, they say, by Anne of Brittany) which overlooks the town of Gien, and he exercised a kind of secular patronage over the Convent of St. Claire, in which Sophie was imprisoned.

‡ Unpublished letter from Mirabeau to Boucher, dated October 13th 1779.

§ Mirabeau constantly affirmed that, on the 13th of December 1775, the marriage of Sophie, which took place July 1st 1771, had not yet been consummated.

situation I would be torn to pieces before I would acknowledge a crime I had not committed. However, I shall not prevent her from subscribing to whatever she thinks proper.

“ But, my friend, you and M. de Marville have built your argument upon an illusion, if you believe that the Marquis of Monnier, closely guarded as he is by the Valdahons, will take back his wife. Further, I am convinced that I could not myself prevail upon the lady to return. In one of the papers in lemon juice *, which we have destroyed for ever, were written these very words: ‘ if you would have me return, I will return ; but after taking poison, that I may be either dead or dying when I arrive.’ This is the little chicken you think so tame and tractable, and of whom M. de Marville coolly said to me—

“ ‘ She never would have left her husband, but at your instigation.’

“ ‘ Sir,’ I replied, with still greater coolness, ‘ no one can know the truth of this matter except Madame de Monnier and I.’

“ The Marchioness of Monnier is the meekest of women in her domestic intercourse ; and the evenness of her temper, joined to her singular sensibility, is a phenomenon ;—but her heart is full of impetuosity and her imagination the most vivid that ever existed.

“ I am convinced you do not suspect that from any feeling of jealousy I would prevent her from returning to an old man near eighty, whom she abhors, and who has scarcely even polluted her lips. My only motive is a repugnance founded upon natural delicacy, and the uneasiness I should feel at the thought of her being in such a den of wild beasts. But if it was by telling me that Madame de Monnier’s refusal had raised her in M. de Marville’s estimation, that this gentleman sought to sound my inclinations as to her return to Pontarlier, it is a singular way of sounding a man’s opinion. As to the ‘ measures for the revision of the suit,’ you are right, and I told M. de Marville that I should have no difficulty in getting the decree quashed by proving that the witnesses were bribed ; but that it would be quite as prudent not to revive the suit.

“ I cannot conceive, my very dear friend, how you too can urge to me the personal advantages I have in the settlement of Madame de

* An allusion to the fraud we have related in the present volume.

Monnier's case.—1st, You know that your lawyer considers them absolutely divided, and positively asserts, that to settle the case for one would not be settling it for both. 2ndly, Your notion might be very correct if my father were more equitable, or possessed less influence; but if the proceedings were burned to-morrow he would keep me just as surely shut up in the Donjon of Vincennes. You cannot doubt that he would; nor can you doubt any more that he could at once sway the Monniers if he chose. Then what personal motive can I have in all this business, except Madame de Monnier's advantage? When Dupont asked my father what reasons there were, his pardon being granted, which could prevent my release, did you hear him allege this suit as an obstacle?

“ My friend, I am, generally speaking, of all men living one of those who think less of themselves when their heart is affected. In the present case it is not my own situation that moves me. I have deeply reflected upon the subject. My father alone can save me, so long as Government abstains from spontaneously interfering in my behalf. I certainly wish most earnestly that Madame de Monnier's troubles were at an end; but I wish it only on her own account.”

Thus we see that Mirabeau, either because he was unacquainted with Sophie's magnanimous motive, or because he placed no reliance upon its results, or else thought that she was paying too dearly for it, pursued a very different line of conduct. He concealed nothing from her, nor did he write to any other person in a different manner from that adopted towards herself. Whilst Sophie was entreating for only an unconditional pardon, a simple reconciliation by the fact of her return, he wanted her to demand the previous withdrawal of the action, and that her condemnation should be set aside *. Meanwhile, Sophie not only concealed the steps she was taking, but even denied them †, and, descending for the only time in her life to duplicity, which puts the finishing stroke to her glorious devotion, she went so far as to reproach Mirabeau with much ‘ warmth,

* Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. iv. pp. 4—8.

† Peuchet asserts that she was resolutely fixed in her determination (vol. i. p. 391).

eloquence, love, and virtue *; for having urged her to return to the Marquis of Monnier †; a reproach which he repelled with the same spirit, by alleging and repeating ‡ his former explanations. On the other hand, although he advised Sophie, in conformity to the interest of both, and to the dignity of their condition and their cause, he loudly disclaimed any wish to injure the family of the Marquis of Monnier.

"My project," said he, "would deprive her daughter of a station, but of an odious station, which does not rightly belong to her §. I will never sanction, by my advice, Gabrielle Sophie becoming Mdle. de Monnier. My delicacy, my reason, my conscience, and my love will not allow it ||."

In fine, he persisted on a much more serious occasion.

Deeming himself at the point of death, and recommending Gabrielle Sophie to his brother, Viscount Mirabeau, he said—

"You will easily believe that I can never consent to be an accomplice in an evident robbery, which would be committed, if they were to settle upon my daughter the property of a man wrongly reputed her father, and whose natural heirs would, perhaps, become victims of the fraud ¶."

Sophie continued resolute **, and even impatient, if we may place faith in a letter from her mother.

"I see great difficulties in the way; yet I serve you as faithfully as if I approved of the step. If, however, it does not succeed, have the good sense not to grieve, and make up your mind to wait until circumstances bring about your freedom. You have always said, that provided M. de Mirabeau was happy, you should feel so too. Since you are convinced that the moment of his happiness is so near at hand ††, you must form your resolution accordingly. If you

* Original Letters from Vincennes, vol. iv. p. 72.

† Ibid., vol. iv. p. 36.

‡ Ibid., vol. iv. p. 71—76.

§ Ibid., vol. iv. p. 164.

|| Ibid., vol. iv. p. 184; see also pp. 182—185.

¶ Ibid., vol. iv. p. 315.

** And yet, at the same time, she wrote to Mirabeau—"I think the Pontarlier negotiation will succeed, because I am almost dead with the fear of it."—*Unpublished letter, dated May 19th 1780.*

†† Letter from Madame de Ruffey to Sophie, dated July 27th 1780. An allusion to the speedy liberation of Mirabeau.

were fortunate enough to feel that God directs all things, that He it is who regulates every event for the best, and that, when we have applied secondary causes as aptly as prudence and reason allow us, we must still rely on Him—you would surely feel more happiness and peace of mind than you can derive from the false philosophy lately imparted to you *.”

Madame de Ruffey all this time would not exert herself for any one but her daughter.

“ If you mean to include any but yourself in the treaty, I shall send your papers back, and decline taking any further steps in the matter †. If you wish the troubles of other people to terminate as well as yours, the interested parties must use their own exertions to that effect. I will know nothing about it. When you informed me that they were acting only for yourself, I did not believe it. Had I been sure I was right, I should have suspended my interference, being very averse to owe any thing to a hand which has pierced my heart ‡.”

We shall not prolong this episodical narrative. Our letters show that Sophie no longer used mystery; that with Mirabeau's consent she continued to act; and that Madame de Valdahon, putting to a very natural, and it must be confessed, a very proper use, the influence she had over her father, whose infirmities daily increased, was very careful to remove whatever might have tended effectually to a reconciliation which must have placed once more in jeopardy her fortune and that of her children, together with the peace and happiness of all parties concerned.

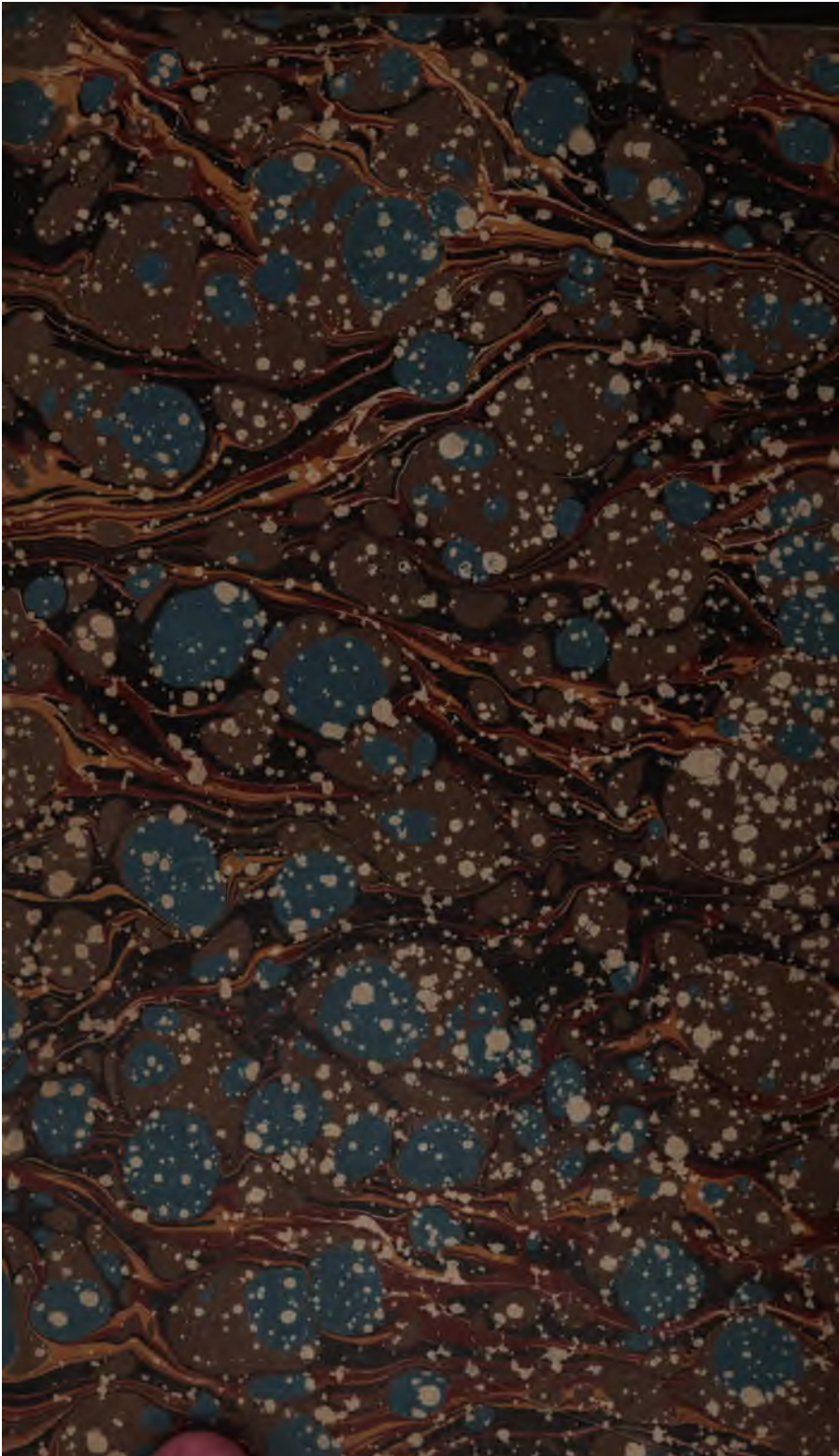
* Letter from Madame de Ruffey to Sophie, dated May 1st 1780.

† Ibid., July 27th 1780.

‡ Letter from Madame de Ruffey to Sophie, dated August 11th 1780.

THE END.

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